



**Want, don't, can't: Student second language enrolment in Tasmania**

by

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## **Abstract**

Languages education in Australian schools is struggling with declining enrolments in the post-compulsory years, resulting in fewer than one in five year twelve students graduating with a second language (L2). Understanding what motivational factors affect students' elective L2 enrolment is crucial to addressing this decline. The common perception is that the decline is caused by a lack of interest from students, as the majority discontinue their learning once it ceases to be mandatory. This study, grounded in the work of Zoltán Dörnyei in the field of second language motivational research, found that this is a simplistic view and that the reasons for the decline are more complex than can be explained by reference merely to student interest. This project used mixed methods to investigate the reasons why Tasmanian students do or do not choose to enrol in an elective second language at school, and explored the relationship of motivational factors that affect their decisions. A state-wide survey of Year 9 to 12 students was conducted, followed by a series of focus group interviews with students from seven schools. Data analysis revealed that students' L2 enrolment status and informing motivations fell into five broad categories: those who enrolled and continued their L2 studies; those who enrolled but were doubtful of continuing in the future; those who wished to continue their L2 studies but were prevented from enrolling; those who discontinued after some elective language study; and those who did not continue and had no intention of enrolling in an elective L2.

The key finding that contradicts the common perception is that a significant number of students are motivated to enrol in an elective L2, but are prevented from doing so by a range of personal and systemic barriers. Indeed, more than half of all students who were not enrolled in an elective L2 cited systemic barriers as reasons for non-enrolment, followed by the need to prioritise career-related or prerequisite subjects. The strongest influential factors for continuation in an elective language subject were an interest and enjoyment of languages

and language learning, positive learning experiences, and the desire to travel and communicate. Overall, students who did not continue were influenced by the perception that they could communicate overseas using English, a lack of requirement for future orientations, the inability to fit the subject into their study course, the high workload, and the desired language not being offered. This research found that instead of a motivational dichotomy informed by interest in L2 between continuing and discontinuing students, there is a complex ensemble of factors that affect subject choice and enrolment decisions regarding elective second language learning.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

At the end of compulsory second language (L2) learning, students reach a cliff edge regarding their languages education choice. National figures indicate that the majority of students go over the cliff edge by not choosing an elective L2 subject, and this fall represents the huge enrolment decline trend experienced in Australia. The Asia Education Foundation (AEF) (2014) report estimated in 2014 that by Years 11 and 12, only 11% of students were studying an elective L2. However, while it appears that students are not valuing second language learning by not choosing it, is this actually the case? Are these students jumping from the cliff edge or being pushed? It is often assumed that the enrolment decline represents a lack of interest or relevance from students, but this is a simplistic view. Instead, there is a complex array of factors which combine to influence students' subject decisions. This is demonstrated by the following profile of a Year 12 male student, Patrick, and his second language education journey:

I came here in Year 7. Before that, I was at a school which taught French and that was very slow, and very gradual. I grew up in a household that was a sort of a very funny household. We really liked impersonating other people for jokes. So I grew up learning accents et cetera. So when I started learning languages, you know, putting on the

accent and going into the language, I was able to do that fairly easily.

When I was in Year 7 it was French and Chinese. It was Chinese for the first half of the year and then French for a term. That was very interesting because that was the first time I was introduced to Chinese. I got right into it, it was very comfortable. I had a preference for Chinese because I found it a little bit more challenging and I thought that was a lot of fun. When I came home and I was prattling off Chinese words my dad looked at me and he said, "You know what, if you can continue that and if you can speak it in your later life you're going to learn a lot because China's right up there, and there's so many people and it's growing so much. You're going to really need it. Companies are going to like it." So, I was pushed even by my parents to keep doing it.

Positive feedback [from teachers] really pushed me through and I really worked hard. It was just the constant positive feedback that kept me coming back to choosing a language other than English.

I wanted to do French and Chinese in grade 9, but they [the school] didn't let me, it wasn't on the right time. I have been doing Chinese for all my time at [School F]. And I did some French in Year 10 as well as Chinese in the same year. So that was actually a fun year. Doing the two subjects, it was kind of like cleansing the palate each time. It was very refreshing to learn a bit of Chinese and then learn a bit of French. I thought learning the languages was quite slow, so at that level, it was quite a nice intake actually. I stopped [French] because I was told that a number of students had done it [studied two languages] and they had

dropped one or the other to do well in a singular one. So, I was thinking I'd do Chinese in Year 11 which I had been doing for four years and I thought I'd do quite well in that. Then, in Year 12, I could probably pick up French again; try my hand at it if I wanted to. That didn't happen. I didn't end up doing it. I probably would've done French, but I needed a science to be applicable for studying to be a pilot. I had to substitute that instead. I know a fair bit [of Chinese], but no, I do not feel like I know enough. I would need to continue on outside of school. [While studying to be a pilot] I'd choose it as a secondary [subject], absolutely. I wouldn't want to drop it now. It would be a shame.

Patrick's profile demonstrates the complexity of factors which affect students' languages education. He is clearly a committed student who enjoys learning second languages, and he wanted to study both French and Chinese throughout his entire secondary and senior secondary education. Unfortunately, this desire was affected three times throughout his schooling, which prevented him from doing so. First, a timetable clash with both languages scheduled simultaneously, followed by staff advice to focus only on one language, and then the need to prioritise a prerequisite science subject over French. Therefore, Patrick studied pre-tertiary Chinese in Year 11, the highest level of study, and then had no room on his timetable for French in Year 12 like he had planned. A combination of systemic structures and career subject prioritisation prevented Patrick's enrolment in an elective second language subject, and this was found to be a common story among participants in the present study. While some students chose not to enrol in an elective L2 due to a range of influences, others were forced to discontinue their languages education. These experiences were

discovered through data collection that aimed to answer the research questions which guided the study, and these are presented after the background to the study.

## 1.1 Background to the study

Second language learning is an integral aspect of a global education, recognised for a range of important reasons. The *Global Perspectives: A statement on global education for Australian schools* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2008) framework reported that “twenty-first century Australians are members of a global community, connected to the whole world by ties of culture, economics and politics, enhanced communication and travel and a shared environment” (p. 2). On a daily basis, people are encountering a variety of languages and cultures due to the technological advancements that have been central to the process of globalisation, as radio, television, internet and other software developments bring people into contact around the world (Fernandez, 2008). Despite the increase of globalisation, or indeed because of it, native English speakers are lulled into a false sense of security that English is enough, with the rise of it as a lingua franca, which is defined by Grosjean (2013) as a language of communication. It is stated in the Australian Curriculum: Languages rationale that “a capability in English only is no longer sufficient” (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2014a) (para 3), as monolingual speakers are no longer the norm in the world. This is further argued by Liddicoat (2002), who stated that “we in the English-speaking world seem to have lost sight of languages as educationally useful and we have seen this view increasingly undermined by the argument that ‘everyone speaks English’” (p. 30), and this leads to students perceiving languages education to be irrelevant to their future lives.

However, there are a number of benefits gained from second language learning. According to the Group of Eight (Go8) (2007) report, the cognitive advantages of learning a second language involve “divergent thinking processes and more efficient use of brain functions” (p.1). Learning a second language enhances learners’ first language skills, as they understand that languages are systems which can be compared (Fernandaz, 2008; Liddicoat, 2002). The Languages rationale states that “learning languages broadens students’ horizons in relation to the personal, social, cultural and employment opportunities that an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world presents” (ACARA, 2014a, para 3), and this importance is demonstrated by the inclusion of Languages as one of the eight key learning areas. Crozet, Liddicoat, and Lo Bianco (1999), Liddicoat (2002) and Scarino (2014) all highlighted the importance of second language learning for understanding different cultures, which then encourages appreciation and acceptance of diversity. This importance is explained by Tinsley and Board (2013) who stated that “speaking another language provides a window to a different culture and customs and, in turn, provides us with a mirror to our own” (para 10), and further explained that being monolingual carries a culture risk. When this reflection of one’s own culture does not occur, the acceptance of cultural differences is not encouraged, which is an important benefit of second language learning.

Nearly a decade later, the argument by Clyne, Pauwels, and Sussex (2007) that Australia’s languages education is a catastrophe remains relevant, with low yet stable national enrolment figures suggesting that 89% of Year 11 and 12 students do not study an elective second language subject (AEF, 2014). This is credited to weak pathways to Year 10, a lack of mandatory learning, and the strong belief that ‘English

is enough'. This is demonstrated by Lo Bianco's (2005) argument that "the biggest predictor of being monolingual is to have English as a first language" (p. 6), and this encourages what Clyne (2005) termed as a 'monolingual mindset'. In relation to this, Cole (2007) stated the current problem of Australia's languages education is that "a culture of valuing a second language does not exist. Untangling what are the causes and what are the symptoms of this failure to ignite students' interest in second language learning is complex" (pp. 8-9). However, as stated at the beginning of this chapter, a lack of interest in languages subjects may not be the only problem affecting enrolment declines, as while Cole (2007) referred to the causes and symptoms as complex, this is in direct relation to a lack of interest, whereas Spence-Brown (2014) has argued that multiple factors converge to affect students' enrolment decisions. This issue has led to the following research questions being posed which guided the research design and investigation.

## **1.2 Research questions and problem investigated**

The purpose of this study was to investigate students' motivations for second language learning, and how this affects their subject choices. The following four research questions were posed to guide the study and address the problem being investigated:

RQ1 What factors influence students' enrolment decisions when considering elective second language subjects?

RQ2 Are there any barriers which prevent students from enrolling in an elective second language subject?

RQ3 How does the L2 Motivational Self System apply in the Tasmanian context?

RQ4 Can the L2 Motivational Self System be applied to students who are not studying a second language?

To attempt to answer these questions, the study was designed with an explanatory mixed methods approach which utilised both quantitative and qualitative methods, providing a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. Exploring secondary and senior secondary students' motivational influences regarding elective L2 subject choice allowed the true story of the enrolment decline to be uncovered, and understanding this story will allow key stakeholders to address the issues which are affecting the enrolment trend. Misunderstanding of reasons for elective L2 enrolment decline leads to schools offering less of these subjects as they perceive there to be a lack of demand, however this creates a cycle of less classes, which impacts students' ability to enrol, which schools perceive as a lack of demand and therefore reduce the number of classes, restarting the cycle. To develop an understanding of the situation in the Tasmanian context, a state wide survey was conducted, followed by focus group interviews in seven schools. Participants in the study were students in Years 9 to 12, as these were the year levels in which second language subjects were not mandatory and students were able to choose elective subjects. Data analysis consisted of descriptive and inferential statistics in relation to the quantitative data and thematic analysis techniques for the qualitative data. While Dörnyei's (2005) framework was to be the reciprocal lens, it emerged in data analysis that it alone was not sufficient enough to explain the complexities of students' second language learning motivations. Therefore, a more appropriate framework was adapted to be able to apply completely

to the discovered situation. Martin and Jansen's (2012) original framework of motivational profiles was adapted to include additional classifications, which reflected the complexity of the research questions.

### **1.3 Significance of the study**

Second language learning motivation is a popular area of research within the field of second language acquisition (SLA), with many studies investigating factors which affect initial motivation to learn, along with sustained motivation to continue learning. Reviewing published literature between 2005 and 2014, Boo, Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) found that empirical investigations have been conducted in 53 different countries, with a dominance in East Asia in terms of geographical location and learner nationality, as well as a focus on learning English as a second language. A further dominance was found regarding participants, with many studies researching senior secondary and university level learners (Boo, Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). The above report of research output for the last decade positions the present study in a unique position in a number of ways. First, as an Australian study, it is situated in the context of researching mainly monolingual participants learning a language other than English. This is a direct contrast to the majority of East Asian studies researching the learning of English, for which motivations differ due to its global status as a *lingua franca*. Furthermore, the participants of the present study are the population that is described by Boo, Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) as underrepresented in previous studies, a situation which is "far from ideal" (p. 151). Therefore the present study is targeting a global gap in the exploration of English-speaking secondary students' motivation to learn a second language. Furthermore, little research has been conducted in Australia



using Dörnyei's (2005) framework, thus the present study is in a position to make a useful contribution to the field.

## **1.4 Outline of the thesis**

Chapter Two provides a review of the literature relevant to the present study. The chapter explores second language learning and its implementation world-wide, its importance as part of a holistic education, and the challenges which face languages education. Motivational factors affecting students' enrolment in language subjects are discussed, followed by an outline of L2 motivational research in the field of SLA.

Chapter Three provides a detailed account of the methodology of the present study, which includes explanations of the methodological approach, research design, methods, participants and ethical considerations. Chapter Four reports the findings of the study, and in Chapter Five these are discussed in relation to the associated literature. Chapter Six provides a summary of the study, and presents the conclusions which have been drawn from the findings and discussion of the previous chapters.

The implications of these conclusions are discussed, and recommendations for further research are offered.

## **1.5 Chapter summary**

This chapter began with one participant's second language learning experience to set the scene for the remainder of the thesis. Within this student's profile, a range of motivational influences were revealed, both as encouraging and preventative factors.

This introductory chapter has provided an overview of the study's background in which this investigation is situated, and outlined the research problem, research

questions and significance of the study. A brief guide of the structure of the thesis was presented, and the following chapter expands on the background of the study and the associated literature which has informed the design and implementation of the present study.

## Chapter 2

# Literature Review

Investigating the influential factors affecting students' second language enrolment decisions provides an understanding of the enrolment decline, and whether language value is recognised by students. This chapter presents a review of the literature concerning the different aspects relevant to this issue, starting with a macro perspective before narrowing into a more focused review. First, languages education and its context within education is explained to develop an understanding of the topic of research. Next, the provision of languages education in international, national and local contexts is explored. This leads to the outline of the challenges in Australia's languages education, which informed the development of the research question guiding the present study. Previous research which investigated similar research problems is then reviewed to explore a variety of factors which affect students' enrolment decisions regarding second language learning. Finally, the development of second language motivation in second language acquisition (SLA) research is outlined, providing an overview of research periods since the middle of last century, and how this has affected the development of Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivational Self System construct, which is the theory that has been applied to the context of the present study. The chapter concludes with a brief introduction to the contemporary direction of research in the SLA field.

## **2.1 Languages education**

As the present research study investigates students' elective second language enrolment decisions, it is essential to outline the concept and context of languages education. Therefore, in this section a description of languages education is provided, followed by its international, national and local implementation, along with its current situation within these contexts. Then the importance of languages education is presented, as it is integral to understand its role and why the current research project is dedicated to investigating this area.

### **2.1.1 What is languages education?**

Languages education refers to the languages-specific element of an education, the learning of a language additional to the first (native) language. There are many terms when considering the concept of language learning, with 'languages' being the broadest, followed by the popularity of 'second language learning' and 'foreign language learning'. The Asia Education Foundation (AEF) (2014) suggested that the term 'additional' language is the most appropriate as it describes all learners who are learning a language other than their first, regardless of which language or number. This is the misnomer with the use of 'second language' (L2), as it does not account for the knowledge of multiple languages and thus does not adequately describe bi-or multilingual learners. However, the term 'second language', with the accompanying acronym 'L2', is the most popular terminology employed in languages research, and is evidenced in the research field of second language acquisition (SLA). Furthermore, as the theoretical framework used in the present study has the term 'L2' in its name, this terminology is used throughout this thesis, except for the deliberate use of the

term ‘Languages other than English’ (LOTE) in the results chapter to align with the survey instrument terminology. Previously, the term LOTE was common in Australia, described by the AEF (2014) as “terminology which arose in the absence of scope and sequenced languages curricula” (p. 12), however this is no longer appropriate with the development of Language curricula as part of the Australian Curriculum. The development of this Curriculum includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages and Auslan (Australian Sign Language) along with thirteen modern languages. The rationale for the Languages curricula, one of the eight key learning areas of the Australian Curriculum, stated that:

Language learning provides the opportunity for students to engage with the linguistic and cultural diversity of the world and its peoples, to reflect on their understanding of experience in various aspects of social life, and on their own participation and ways of being in the world.

ACARA, 2014a, para. 2

This highlights the importance of students understanding the world’s diversity in a century in which globalisation is rapidly occurring, necessitating a global education which equips students with the skills required to effectively participate and contribute. The following section introduces the concept of a global education, and the integral role of languages within this education.

### **2.1.2 Global education**

In the twenty-first century, global education is a worldwide pedagogical approach that aims to equip students with the skills to contribute to a more peaceful and sustainable world and solve the problems of the future, thus becoming global citizens. Wierenga

(2013) described global citizenship as the interconnectedness of all life on the planet, and defined interconnectedness as “how, as individuals, we identify ourselves, how we engage, how we relate to each other and how we act” (p. 1). Global education is an umbrella term that is described by Marshall (2015) as an “all-encompassing term that suggests an adjectival educational model with holistic, affective, cognitive and participatory dimensions” (p. 109). This demonstrates the complexity of naming and describing global education, and is highlighted by Marshall (2015) who explained that there is an ongoing terminology debate in the UK. In 2002, the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe organised the Europe-wide Global Education Congress, at which the *Maastricht Global Education Declaration* was adopted (O’Loughlin & Wegimont, 2003). In this Declaration, the concept of global education was explained as “education that supports peoples’ search for knowledge about the realities of their world, and engages them in critical global democratic citizenship towards greater justice, sustainability, equity and human rights for all” (O’Loughlin & Wegimont, 2003, p. 147). The *Global perspectives: A framework for global education in Australian schools* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2008) document explained that a global education is relevant to all learning areas, and students are encouraged to participate in shaping a better shared world through open-mindedness and the willingness to take action for change. In regards to second language learning in a global education, acquiring a foreign language promotes cultural understanding and acceptance, increases international understanding, and encourages cooperation and respect (Commonwealth of Australia, 2008). According to Fernandaz (2008), the nature of interactions in a globalised world is more complex and varied, and language is central to these interactions because it is through language that communication

occurs and meaning is constructed. The *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (Melbourne Declaration) (Ministerial Council on Education Employment Training and Youth Affairs [MCEETYA], 2008) recognised the impact of globalisation and the opportunities that it presents for Australian students, stating that there is “the need to nurture an appreciation of and respect for social, cultural and religious diversity, and a sense of global citizenship” (p. 4). This is integrated into the second goal of the Melbourne Declaration (MCEETYA, 2008) of developing active and informed citizens. The importance of a global education for students is outlined in the *Global perspectives* framework (Commonwealth of Australia, 2008), with the rationale that “twenty-first century Australians are members of a global community, connected to the whole world by ties of culture, economics and politics, enhanced communication and travel and a shared environment” (p. 2), which again highlights the importance of the interconnectedness of people in a shared world.

Global education is a new pedagogy aiming to create global citizens, and languages education is an important part of this because learning other languages and cultures enables students to better understand their own language, culture, and identity. This is because “the experience of being in two worlds at once involves noticing, questioning and developing awareness of how language and culture shape identity” (ACARA, 2014b, para. 2). The importance of languages learning is recognised for a range of reasons beyond contributing beneficially to a global education, and these reasons are explored in the next section.

### 2.1.3 Importance of languages education

The importance of languages education is demonstrated by numerous social, cognitive, communicative and economic benefits. This section first outlines research which suggests positive cognitive effects that are gained from speaking a second language, before exploring national documents which highlight the importance of languages education, and government initiatives and goals which suggest the recognised value of second language learning for all Australians.

Research suggests that there numerous benefits to be gained from learning a second language, from positive brain effects to the development of personal qualities such as acceptance and respect. Much research has investigated the effects of bilingualism, which is defined as Grosjean (2013) as “the use of two or more languages (or dialects) in everyday life” (p. 5) when considering the psycholinguistics of bilingual people, as there are many different definitions depending on context. There are two types of bilingualism, termed *additive* and *subtractive*. Lo Bianco (2010) explained that some languages are more beneficial and therefore more powerful, making them additive, and that this type of bilingualism is regarded as strong, socially additive and materially rewarding, and is popular with learners and policy makers. Additive bilingualism is best described as learners attaining a second language for material benefits while still maintaining a “secure role and permanent presence of their original or own native language” (Lo Bianco, 2010, p. 2). Subtractive bilingualism refers to languages of minority groups, often when the native language is not valued and individuals are being assimilated into another society; thus the national language that individuals in these groups learn becomes dominant over their original language, which leads to language loss and educational deficits (Lo



Bianco, 2010; Liddicoat, 2001). In contrast, there are numerous benefits associated with additive bilingualism with research suggesting that along with proficiency in the second language, other cognitive and linguistic skills are developed (Liddicoat, 2001).

Research into the effects of bilingualism and language learning on the brain has led researchers to suggest that bilingualism changes the structure of the brain by increasing both grey and white matter, affecting executive control, and preserving regions of the brain. Enhanced cognitive skills were investigated by Mechelli et al. (2004), who identified that bilinguals had increased grey matter in the left inferior parietal cortex compared to monolinguals, and the density was affected by proficiency and age of acquisition. Increased grey matter density suggests higher levels of intelligence or ability in the specific area that corresponds to that region of the brain, such as enhanced musical or artistic ability. From their research investigating grey matter density between bilinguals and monolinguals, Mechelli et al. (2004) concluded that their findings “suggest that the structure of the human brain is altered by the experience of acquiring a second language” (p. 757). Structural changes in the brain regions related to language were also suggested by the results from a study of intensive language learners conducted by Mårtensson et al. (2012). Further benefits of knowing two languages are outlined by Bialystok (2007), whose research investigating the cognitive effects of bilingualism suggested that executive control develops earlier and deteriorates later for bilinguals compared to monolinguals. Executive control consists of the processes *attention*, *inhibition*, *monitoring* and *switching*, and for bilinguals who regularly use two language systems, the functioning of executive control is boosted across other cognitive domains (Bialystok, 2007). Therefore, being bilingual is advantageous in this respect as cognitive processes are

enhanced due to the knowledge and use of a second language. The later deterioration of executive control and the suggestion that the brain is altered by second language acquisition are positive benefits which align with research conducted by Craik, Bialystok, and Freedman (2010), which suggests that bilingualism, as a stimulating cognitive activity, contributes to cognitive reserves and delays the onset of symptoms of Alzheimer's Disease (AD).

Recent research by Olsen et al. (2015) supports previous cognitive research, as they suggested from their findings that bilingualism develops greater grey and white matter volume, along with the preservation of the frontal and temporal lobe function in ageing, with older bilinguals not observed to be affected by the decreasing temporal pole cortical thickness displayed by monolinguals. Despite the positive suggestions from cognitive research, Craik et al. (2010) emphasised that any neural changes attributed to second language acquisition are suggestions, and need to be treated with caution due to possible unidentified variables which may have a cause-effect relationship on the outcome. However, it would appear that the benefits gained from additive bilingualism disprove the early suggestions that second language learning detracts from literacy and first language developments, and instead “actually enhances and enriches children's language experience, and offers them unique insights and opportunities for the development of cognitive skills which are unavailable to the monolingual learner” (Fernandaz, 2008, p.8). Research which led to these conclusions has been integral to the recognition of the importance of second language learning, and its value is now being explicitly stated in a number of education documents, discussed below. It is important to recognise that most of the research discussed in

this section refers to bilinguals, and it is unknown the extent of language acquisition required for learners to begin experiencing cognitive benefits.

The Melbourne Declaration (MCEETYA, 2008) highlighted the importance of L2 learning when outlining the need for students to become ‘Asia literate’, a common term used in Government documents in the current century, which is referred to as the Asian Century (Government of Australia, 2012). The White Paper (Government of Australia, 2012) declared that, “as a nation we also need to broaden and deepen our understanding of Asian cultures and languages, to become more Asia literate” (p. 2) for Australia to succeed in the Asian Century. This relates directly to the second goal of the Melbourne Declaration for students to be active and informed citizens who are “able to relate to and communicate across cultures, especially the cultures and countries of Asia” (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 9). The *National Statement on Asia Literacy in Australian Schools 2011–2012* (AEF, 2011) listed areas of action which address all levels of schooling, and was developed to support the Melbourne Declaration (MCEETYA, 2008) aim of Australian students becoming Asia literate, with the rationale that they will gain a competitive edge and contribute to the national advantage. Despite the focus on Asian languages, all second language learning is recognised as an important area of education, as demonstrated by its inclusion as one of the eight key learning areas in the Australian Curriculum. The rationale for Language curricula outlines numerous benefits gained from L2 learning, including: strengthening current communication skills and developing these in the target language; acquiring an intercultural capability, which includes respect for diversity and the understanding of the equal components of language and culture in communication; meta-linguistic reflection of languages, both native and additional;

and extending the understanding of identity (ACARA, 2014a). The term *metalinguistic awareness* refers to the ability to recognise language as a structure and its properties as an object (Reder, Marec-Breton, Gombert, & Demont, 2013), and this concept is crucial to literacy development, as individuals who have high metalinguistic awareness are more conscious of language and how it is used. Liddicoat (2001) argued that by learning a second language, learners are able to compare language systems in a direct and explicit way, which furthers their understanding of literacy, as metalinguistic awareness is developed by “direct experience of the variability and arbitrariness of language” (p. 13). This is beneficial in allowing learners to better understand and use their native language.

It is essential to recognise the benefits of second language learning beyond communication and material gains. Liddicoat (2002) argued the importance of recognising languages as being educationally important instead of just educationally useful, and to justify languages in their own right as opposed to being useful by benefitting other subject areas. By regarding languages as educationally useful their benefits are continually undermined by the belief that knowing English is enough in a globalised world (Liddicoat, 2002). This is recognised by former Prime Minister Tony Abbott (Tony Abbott’s Budget Reply Speech, 2012) who stated that “if Australians are to make their way in the world, we cannot rely on other people speaking our language” (para. 98). This is also argued by Clyne (2005), who stated that “we disadvantage ourselves if we believe that one language is sufficient” (p. x), explaining that with English becoming a global lingua franca, and its status as a pluricentric and international language, there are multiple versions of English which take into account the cultural values and norms of the region, and therefore it is important to understand

the cultural underpinnings of the message being communicated. Furthermore, with the international status of English, many people in the world are now bi- or multilingual, with their English skills rivalling those of native speakers, and it is these people who monolingual speakers are now competing against for jobs (Group of Eight [Go8], 2007). A *lingua franca* refers to a language of communication (Grosjean, 2013), and Seidlhofer (2005) explained that ‘English as a Lingua Franca’ (ELF) is the accepted term when referring to the communication that occurs between two speakers with different native languages. Graddol (2006) argued that intelligibility is more important than accuracy in ELF, and it is a new phenomenon unlike the language that native speakers know. The Nuffield Inquiry (The Nuffield Foundation, 2000) also recognised these issues, stating that “in a world where bilingualism and plurilingualism are commonplace, monolingualism implies inflexibility, insensitivity and arrogance” (p.14). Fortunately, the developers of the new Languages curricula recognised these issues, and the rationale outlined the additional benefits to second language learning past simply being able to communicate in the target language, which links to Liddicoat’s (2002) argument that beyond communication skills, languages education also provides learners with cultural understanding, the skills to communicate across cultural boundaries and contexts in which shared language resources are limited, and a better understanding of their own language and culture through comparison.

Scarino (2014) argued that “within a plurilingual view of learning and education, knowledge and learning are understood and mediated through multiple languages and cultures” (p. 310), and this in turn affects the interpretation of meaning during communication. This links to the concept of the *third place*, which Crozet,

Liddicoat and Lo Bianco (1999) defined as the intermediary place between one's own culture and another during an intercultural interaction, and being able to experience the difference between two cultures as a participant, not an observer, thus the third place is "a point of interaction, hybridity and exploration" (p. 5). They argued that for one to learn about a culture one must learn the affiliated language to truly experience and understand that culture (Crozet et al., 1999). Monolingual multiculturalism leads to an observation of the culture, which is a passive approach due to the lack of entry into the culture in its natural space, where norms are viewed from the inside. This encourages tolerance of other cultures rather than participation within them, and this approach reduces the value of multiculturalism. Therefore, understanding other languages allows entry into the third place, further described by Crozet et al. (1999) as "the unbounded point of intersection where interactants from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds meet and communicate successfully" (p. 11). This demonstrates the essential partnership between culture and language, and the importance of embedding both cultural and linguistic learning into languages education.

The Australian Government also recognises the importance of second language learning for all students, as demonstrated by the following goals and initiatives. In his 2012 budget reply speech, Tony Abbott announced his Government's commitment to "work urgently with the states to ensure that at least 40% of Year 12 students are once more taking a language other than English within a decade" (Tony Abbott's Budget Reply Speech, 2012, para. 102). Two years later this was still the goal, with the Australian Government revising second language education in schools, with the additional plan of mandating language learning for all

students in Years 5 to 10 by 2025 (Australian Government Department of Education, 2014a). It was reported that in the interim, compulsory languages education should occur in Years 7 to 10 in all schools, however this is not enforced (Australian Government Department of Education, 2014b). Lowering the mandatory age for second language learning aligns with Tony Abbott's (Tony Abbott's Budget Reply Speech, 2012) belief that every child in pre-school should be exposed to languages, and this is demonstrated with the Government's trial of the Early Learning Languages Australia (ELLA) initiative.

In 2014 the Australian Government announced a budget of \$11.6 million for two programmes designed to boost the study of second languages in schools, with \$9.8 million allocated for the trial of the Early Learning Languages Australia (ELLA) initiative, and \$1.8 million allocated for the development of new language curricula in the Australian Curriculum (Pyne, 2014). This announcement was accompanied by the admission that second language learning had not been a priority in recent years and the recognition of the importance of L2 learning for the future economy of the nation and the provision of opportunities for students. In a media release by the Hon Christopher Pyne MP, then Minister for Education, it was stated that "it is crucial that Australia invests in second language education to ensure our students are not left behind... Australian students face increasing competition from overseas and will need new skills to succeed in the new jobs economy" (Pyne, 2014, para. 4). Two years later, Minister for Education and Training Simon Birmingham reiterated the Government's commitment of reviving second language learning in schools, as demonstrated by their initial investment in the ELLA trial, and following its success, the extension of the trial in 2016 (App to revive language learning, 2016). As part of

the Government's plan to increase Year 12 L2 enrolments within a decade, the initial ELLA trial was conducted throughout 2015, and involved the provision of language-based mobile applications (apps) for preschool children, with the aim "to provide language exposure for preschool children, in order to encourage further language learning in later years of schooling and to help address barriers to languages education in the early years of education" (Deloitte Access Economics, 2015, p ii). One of the positive findings based on the impact of the trial was that a considerable amount of participants displayed high and sustained engagement with the apps over the year, which led to increased language exposure for preschool children in the trial (Deloitte access Economics, 2015). Based on their evaluation, it was found that there was justification for extending the trial period of the ELLA programme, to which the Government agreed for 2016. In light of the success of the initiative, Minister Birmingham stated that the Government has committed \$6 billion to developing similar apps to increase students' interests in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects (App to revive language learning, 2016). This would suggest that the ELLA trial was highly valued and, should the Government still consider language exposure a policy priority, it is likely to be extended into the future.

The importance of second language learning has been clearly demonstrated, and this included a brief insight into the Australian context through some government goals and initiatives. The next section explores second language learning through international, national and state (Tasmanian) contexts to further develop an understanding of languages education in the current century.



## **2.2 Second language learning contexts**

The previous section detailed the importance of languages education within a global context, and this section provides an overview of the implementation and enrolment statistics of this education across the globe. First, the international context is outlined, followed by an exploration of second language learning at a national level, with a focus on policies and curriculum, concluding with a summary of the Tasmanian context in which this research project was situated.

### **2.2.1 International context**

For many countries such as France, England, Scotland, Austria, Netherlands, Japan, China and the Republic of Korea, second language learning is a compulsory subject in junior and senior secondary school, and this is also the case in some states in the United States and Canada (AEF, 2014). According to the AEF (2014), the United Kingdom (UK), New Zealand and Australia remain at the bottom of the second languages education list in terms of provision and implementation.

The European Union consists of 28 countries (referred to as the EU-28), and in 2002 the Barcelona European Council recommended that all students should learn at least two second languages from an early age (Barcelona European Council, 2002). In many EU Member States, almost 100% of primary school students choose to learn English as it is a mandatory subject upon entering secondary schooling. This is with the exception of Luxembourg, where the focus is on German and French; Belgium, which has a focus on French or Dutch; and the UK, where over two thirds of students learn French (Statistics Explained, 2016). In secondary schools in the EU-28, 94.1% of students were learning English in 2014, with 51.2% of senior secondary students

learning two or more second languages, with Luxembourg recording 100% of students doing so (Statistics Explained, 2016). Finland, Romania, Slovakia and France all showed rates above 98.5% (Statistics Explained, 2016). In comparison, the lowest rates of students learning two or more languages were recorded in Portugal, Ireland, the UK and Greece, which all came in below ten percent (Statistics Explained, 2016). England fared poorly in the First European Survey on Language Competences (European Commission, 2012), ranking as the lowest participating EU country with only nine percent of students achieving the proficiency level ‘Independent’, with Tinsley and Board (2014) reporting that 30% of 15 year old students did not even achieve any measurable level of proficiency on this test. However, there are worrying statistics across the EU, as according to the European Commission (2010) report there are large variations in language proficiency across countries, and overall proficiency needs to be significantly improved with 14% of students not reaching the basic level of proficiency. The UK is experiencing language enrolment declines, with Worne (2015) summarising the national outlook on second language education as a case of “can’t, won’t, don’t” (para. 1). The Nuffield Foundation conducted the Nuffield Inquiry between 1998 and 2000, and investigated the UK’s language capability (The Nuffield Foundation, 2000). The inquiry reported that English was not enough in terms of future skills and economic successes, with students at a disadvantage in the jobs market. Furthermore, despite public demand for the provision of an early languages education in schools, this was not on the UK’s agenda, nor was there a coherent approach to continuous language study (The Nuffield Foundation, 2000). There was also found to be a lack of direction and motivation for secondary students, with 90% of students discontinuing second language study at age 16. These issues

were compounded by the lack of language teachers and the closure of university language departments (The Nuffield Foundation, 2000). Worne (2015) reported that university enrolments in languages have experienced a steady decline for seven straight years, and A-level and GCSE language uptake has stalled, a further indication of the languages education problem.

Second language learning is not compulsory at any level of schooling in New Zealand, nor is there a national language policy. Similar to the UK and Australia, New Zealand has been experiencing a steady decline in student enrolment numbers in second languages, and this has cumulated with the lowest enrolment rate recorded in 2014, with only 20.3% of students studying a second language (Tan, 2015). The same year, Minister for Education Hekia Parata announced that the Government was investing \$10 million into increasing second language provision over five years (Parata, 2014), which led to the development of the Asian Language Learning in Schools programme (ALLiS). This programme supports schools to establish or continue their Asian language programs, with an emphasis on creating pathways from primary to secondary schools (Ministry of Education, 2016). This demonstrates that the New Zealand government does value second language learning and understands its importance. This is supported by Parata (2014), who explained that their long term aim is for all students to become sufficiently proficient in a second language, which not only increases cognitive skills but will enable them to communicate with key stakeholders as trading links grow. This value is also recognised by the community, with 83% of New Zealanders believing that school children should learn a language at school (Asia New Zealand Foundation [ANZF], 2014). Like other predominantly English speaking countries, the New Zealand government recognises the need for

languages in a globalised world, and they face the similar challenges of increasing enrolments and providing a quality second languages education that equips students with the proficiency to be able to communicate across different languages and cultures.

Although Australia does have compulsory language learning, it has a similar context to the UK and New Zealand in terms of second language provision and having English as a first language. Like New Zealand, the Australian government also recognises the importance of languages for communication and trade.

### **2.2.2 National context (Australia)**

This section provides a deeper outline of languages education in the Australian national context. As policy and implementation at this level have a direct impact on the Tasmanian context, the national perspective is crucial to this investigation. It is, however, difficult to gain a complete understanding of Australia's languages education situation as data is often unavailable. Liddicoat, Scarino, Curnow, Kohler, Scrimgeour and Morgan (2007) undertook an investigation to support the implementation of the *National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools: National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005–2008* which involved collecting data from a range of sources to provide a thorough description of the current state and nature of Australia's languages education. They outlined the difficulty they experienced attempting to obtain quantitative data for this investigation explaining that: data is often non-existent, not reported, or inaccessible due to confidentiality; when data is available it is often from voluntary reports, which does not provide an accurate representation; figures differ between states and

jurisdictions which make comparison difficult; and it is unclear how to interpret enrolment figures (Liddicoat et al., 2007). In light of this, they advised caution when considering second language learning figures in Australia. This section is divided into three further areas: policy, curriculum, and implementation, to provide a clear overview of Australia's languages education.

### *2.2.2.1 Policy*

The importance of learning a second language is reflected in Australian language policies which constantly address the aim of increasing participation of students studying second languages. The development of L2 policies in Australia spans across two decades; however, Liddicoat (2010) reported that these policies have had little impact on participation levels, therefore the goals of each policy have never been reached. This section outlines the main policies of the last twenty years in Australia and how this has impacted the current state of languages education.

The first explicit language policy, the National Policy on Languages (NPL), was developed in 1987, and operated from the premise that all students should learn at least one language other than English (Liddicoat, 2010). The ideal for this framework was that languages education would be a continuous learning process integrated throughout compulsory schooling, and which was an embedded part of a normative education. According to Lo Bianco (2005) "the NPL was to prove unique in achieving not only bipartisan endorsement but also support from all states, territories and non-government school systems, most of which responded with congruent policies enshrining the comprehensive approach and collaborative ethos" (p. 3), which demonstrates the popularity of this policy. The basic principles governing the NPL were that all Australians would achieve high levels of literate standard Australian

English and achieve bilingualism either by learning a language other than English, or learning English as a second language while maintaining their first language; Indigenous and islander languages would be acknowledged as integral to Australia's heritage and energetic efforts made to preserve, restore and secure them; and the encouragement of equitable and widespread language services (Lo Bianco, 2007). The NPL envisioned an educational provision in which languages learning was a universal experience for all students, and it recognised that this was a radical difference to current education which would involve a long-term change process (Liddicoat, 2010). Lo Bianco (2007) explained that the result of the NPL was a "coherent national system of planning" (p. 98) and stressed that this was the only policy which comprised of a "comprehensive national language plan, extending across all of government and into civil society" (p. 100). This demonstrates that the policy developers acknowledged the difficult task of implementing a national policy, and had created plans to enable the ongoing implementation process to provide a universal languages education.

Despite this vision, policy redevelopment began again only three years later, and in 1991 the Australian Language and Literacy Policy (ALLP) was published. Liddicoat (2010) detailed how this policy shifted from providing a universal education experience to instead expanding present post-compulsory participation and improving the quality of language programs. A number of unimplemented NPL aspects were also eliminated. Pauwels (2007) explained that the ALLP facilitated public discussions of 'instrumentalism' in relation to second language learning, in which the value of study was viewed in terms of enhancing trade, business and international relations. These discussions led to the perception of the national value of

some languages compared to others and Pauwels (2007) believed this impacted on the language selection in schools. Boyd (2007) highlighted four goals of the ALLP which were reiterated from the NPL, albeit with wording changes, which clearly demonstrated the attitude of the government at the time, as the goals “became far more economic and pragmatic towards Australia’s language diversity in the short space of time between the NPL in 1987 and this report [the ALLP] in 1991” (p. 166). Supposedly to forestall public criticism, the ALLP claimed to be a continuation of the NPL; however, Lo Bianco (2007) argued that “in the reality of its essential ethos and objectives the ALLP contradicted and sought to undermine the core multicultural and multilingual basis of the NPL” (p. 53). The phrase ‘for all’ which was prominent in the NPL became notably absent in the new goals (Boyd, 2007), and this demonstrates the new nature of the ALLP, despite claiming strong links to the NPL.

While the ALLP continued for more than a decade, with minor modifications, in 1994 the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools (NALSAS) Strategy was introduced and ran as a parallel policy. This policy targeted language diversity in education, specifying that 15% of Year 12 students studying a language would study Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian or Korean (Liddicoat, 2010). The goals of this policy became very narrow and focused, with the motivation again economic (Boyd, 2007). There was a dramatic rise in the number of schools offering the target languages and the number of students studying them in the first four years of the policy, with Japanese becoming the most widely taught language in Australian schools (Boyd, 2007). NALSAS was ended in 2002 by the Howard government, before the Rudd government introduced the National Asian Languages Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP) in 2008 in an attempt to revisit the aims of NALSAS;

however, funding was cut in 2012 (Dabrowski, 2015). While the funding for Asian languages boosted enrolments in the four target languages, the AEF (2014) argued that “from a macro perspective, programme funding for specific languages seems only to have redistributed enrolments among different languages” (p. 30) with little impact on the national enrolment figures. The AEF (2014) report found that in the period since the NALSSP funding, European language enrolments declined while Asian language enrolments increased, and overall there was constant fluctuation, especially in the six most popular Year 12 languages (Japanese, Mandarin, Indonesian, French, German and Italian). Lo Bianco (2009) described the ideological shifts in the period of these policies as ‘ambitiously multicultural’, ‘energetically Asian’, and ‘fundamentally economic’, demonstrating the changes between policy visions. As this section is deliberately brief to provide a succinct overview, see Clyne (2005), Lo Bianco (2005), and Fernandaz (2008) for a more comprehensive policy history, and Lo Bianco and Aliani (2013) provided a thorough discussion of the gap between policy planning and implementation, and offered a range of suggestions for measures to close the gap and deliver a world class languages education.

Policy informs curriculum, which drives education practice. The National Curriculum has been developed to provide a holistic, universal curriculum, and the next section explores how second language learning is situated within it as a key learning area.

#### *2.2.2.2 Curriculum*

In the new Australian National Curriculum, it appears that the ideal of the NPL is gaining resurgence, as “the Australian Curriculum: Languages is being developed on the assumption that all students will learn languages across primary and secondary



schooling, and that the curriculum will provide for continued learning in different pathways through to the senior secondary years” (ACARA, 2009, p.5). This statement demonstrates that languages are a valued part of current education curricula, and has reintroduced the NPL wording of ‘all students’, however the implementation of this assumption remains to be addressed. Considering previous policies, Liddicoat et al. (2007) argued that one of the difficulties is the mandating of languages, with state policies differing on whether and when languages are compulsory or elective, thus they suggested that mandatory language learning is the most controversial policy issue. This is of interest as it relates to the aim of the Australian Government, who in 2014 announced the intention of mandating second language learning from Year 5 to Year 10 nationwide within a decade (Australian Government Department of Education, 2014a). However, there has been little justification or implementation strategies outlined for this aim.

At the end of 2015 the Education Council endorsed the Foundation – Year 10 Australian Curriculum: Languages for Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Modern Greek, Spanish and Vietnamese, and released the framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages, as well as the Hindi and Turkish curricula (ACARA, 2015). The Australian Curriculum: Languages focuses on learning language and culture, with the aim for students to “learn to communicate meaningfully across linguistic and cultural systems, and different contexts” (ACARA, 2014c, para. 2). Curricula have been designed for each specific language to account for the inherent differences between them. Learner diversity is also recognised, with varying backgrounds affecting students’ experience

and proficiency, therefore the Language curricula have been carefully designed for the Australian languages learning context.

It remains to be seen how the National Curriculum affects Australia's second language education, however the challenges specifically associated with the Language curricula are detailed further in the chapter. Next, in light of the discussion of policy and curriculum, the implementation of languages education in Australian schools is outlined.

### *2.2.2.3 Implementation*

Second languages education differs throughout the states and territories of Australia, leading to a variety of implementation strategies within schools. With a number of languages now endorsed for the Australian Curriculum, its implementation is the next major phase for schools in terms of beginning to teach and assess via Language curricula. Many jurisdictions address languages education through their engagement with the new curriculum, while others have additional or overarching language policies; however, no current policy requires the provision of languages education beyond Years 7 and 8 (AEF, 2014). Language study is not a requirement in any Australian state or territory for senior secondary certification or tertiary entry, and the AEF (2014) explained that “providing students with the freedom to choose subjects that reflect their interests, preferences and learning needs underpins course offerings at the senior secondary level across Australia” (p. 52). This is also highlighted by Bense (2015), who stated that optional second language study means that uptake and continuation is purely based on the decision of the students. While language study is not a requirement, some tertiary institutions offer bonus Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) points which are added to students' final scores; however,

while the AEF (2014) report stated that it is unclear whether the bonus points act as an incentive or reward, it suggested that both are plausible reasons for encouraging student enrolment. The bonus points were found by de Kretser and Spence-Brown (2010) to be one reason that students continued their Japanese studies, along with the positive scaling of raw scores. These systemic advantages, where applicable, certainly appear to boost enrolment figures in the senior secondary years, although it is difficult to get accurate statistics when there is a difference between Year level subjects in different States (de Kretser & Spence-Brown, 2010). This demonstrates the importance of a national policy, which enables the systematic and consistent implementation of language learning across Australia.

This variety of languages implementation strategies across the nation requires an individual examination of Tasmania, as the present research study was conducted solely in this State.

### **2.2.3 The Tasmanian context**

In Tasmania students learn European and Asian languages at public, Catholic and Independent schools. However, not all students are able to study a second language at secondary school, with some schools not offering any elective language subjects, or in some cases not even compulsory language subjects. The current languages education situation in the three schooling sectors are outlined below.

In 2015 there were 11,452 full time students enrolled in Years 9 to 12 in Tasmanian schools (Government students: 7639; Catholic students: 2251; Independent students: 1562). Nationally, it is typical that Year 12 students enrol in five or six subjects, however in Tasmania, just over half of the students in Year 12

enrol in four subjects (Fullarton, Walker, Ainley, & Hillman, 2003). Previously, in the Tasmanian Curriculum Framework, second language learning was termed LOTE and situated in the English – Literacy area because of the associated development of language and communication skills and the enhancement of students' abilities to make comparisons and recognise patterns (Department of Education, 2007). Ashman and Lê (2007) explained that when the NALSAS funding was introduced there was a resurgence of languages teaching in primary schools, and Tasmanian schools were able to begin integrating language as a recognised learning area into the curriculum. In addition to the NALSAS funding program, Tasmania established a policy introducing Languages Other than English (LOTE) as an integral part of the curriculum, with a continuous pathway of language learning from Year 3 through to Year 12 (Ashman & Lê, 2007, p. 5). Currently, Government schools support six languages, each which have their own scope and sequence documents: French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Chinese and Japanese. Government schools are continuing to implement the new Australian Curriculum according to an agreed timeline, with teachers encouraged to begin working with the endorsed version 8.1 (Department of Education Tasmania, 2016). There are two Government documents which include the support of languages learning: *Engaging with Asia Strategy 2013-15* and the *eStrategy*. The *Engaging with Asia Strategy 2013-15* included 'stimulating student engagement with Asian cultures language' as one of the five key priorities of the Strategy, and this priority will be supported by eLearning, the development of course pathways and transition points, and specialist language provision (Department of Education Tasmania, 2013). In the *eStrategy*, which supports the Department's *Learners First Strategy*, it is stated that schools will be supported to provide

opportunities for students to learn languages online. One of the priority actions in the eStrategy is to increase the offer of available languages through the provision of online language resources and courses, with the timeline suggesting a broadening of the 2015 trial courses in 2016 (Department of Education Tasmania, 2014). Catholic schools are formalising their implementation of the Languages curricula in 2016 which includes moderating, assessing and reporting (Catholic Education Tasmania, n.d.). While there is an overarching organisation for the Independent schools (Independent Schools Tasmania), there was no information about their curriculum delivery and it is logical to conclude that individual schools are implementing the Australian Curriculum: Languages according to their own timeframes. State-wide in Years 11 and 12, French, German, Italian, Chinese and Japanese are accredited and assessed by the Office of Tasmanian Assessment Standards and Certificates (TASC) at levels 2 (Foundation) and 3 (pre-tertiary).

Languages education contexts differ throughout the world, but as evidenced in the outline of the national context Australia's languages education is struggling with enrolment declines and a long string of policies which have not had a positive impact on the situation. The next section outlines the challenges that the nation is facing with the current state of languages education, which appears perpetually encumbered by its continuing firm monolingual mindset.

## **2.3 Challenges in languages education**

Languages education in Australia is one of the eight key learning areas, however it does not appear to be afforded the prominence of English, Numeracy, or other STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subjects. Despite almost 70 reports

and investigations being conducted over the past two decades concerning Australia's languages education, it is reported that "senior secondary languages enrolments, as a measure of systemic change, have not increased" (AEF, 2014 p.13). In 2014, the AEF (2014) report estimated that only 11% of Year 11 and 12 students were studying a second language (AEF, 2014), which means that 89% of students were choosing subjects other than languages. As these figures have remained low but stable over the past two decades, it can be estimated that in the past two years since the report, enrolment figures are similar. This demonstrates that despite nearly a decade since it was first declared, the argument that languages education is a national catastrophe and tragedy, as well as an international embarrassment (Clyne et al., 2007), remains unfortunately extremely relevant. A provocative yet descriptive title was created for a Group of Eight (Go8) (2007) report: 'Languages in Crisis: A rescue plan for Australia', indicating the peril that it argued national languages education was (and still is) experiencing. The AEF (2014) report claimed that the pathway to Year 10 language learning is weak due to the non-compulsory status of languages after Year 8, which supports the argument of Liddicoat et al. (2007) that "languages at secondary school become elective too early for the learners to see the value of their learning" (p. 89). This is also in part due to the monolingual mindset of the nation, in which students are not encouraged to value or study second languages. To this end, Scarino (2014) argued that Australia's decade-old 'ambivalent' relationship with second language learning still persists "while the social, linguistic, cultural and educational contexts have become more complex" (p. 290), leading her to suggest that the relationship is better described as a state of inertia in which Clyne's (2005) 'monolingual mindset' description prevails. This is demonstrated by Australia's

literacy education which is “understood monolingually as literacy in English” (Scarino, 2014, p. 291) along with the modernist terms of an ‘inclusive’ education which Scarino (2014) argued is an additive, not transformative term, in which the ‘recognition’, ‘respect’ and ‘celebration’ of cultural diversity (but not linguistic diversity) is understood in regards to multiculturalism in education. While this mindset is affected by factors such as individual and national identity, and how the process of learning is understood (Scarino, 2014), it is also strong due to the majority of the population speaking only English at home, encouraging the narrow view that English is enough due to its status as a global lingua franca. Nationally, 76.8% of the population speak only English at home (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013a), and this rises to 91.7 when considering Tasmania independently (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013b). This data is represented by Figure 2.1 (AEF, 2014, p. 32), which depicts the spread of English-only speakers across Australia. As Tinsley and Board (2013) explained, “the incentive to step outside the comfort of the mother tongue is weak when you already speak the world’s lingua franca” (para. 2), however despite the current popularity of English as a global language, native speakers of Mandarin Chinese and Spanish already surpass the total of native English speakers. Furthermore, as depicted by Figure 2.2, these top three most widely spoken native languages also have extremely large numbers of the global population speaking them as second language users (Tinsley & Board, 2014). Therefore, the threat to global English and the importance of the Asian century are clearly demonstrated, and the need for second language skills are high.

A report for the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) research project revealed that only two percent of Year 12 enrolments were for a second

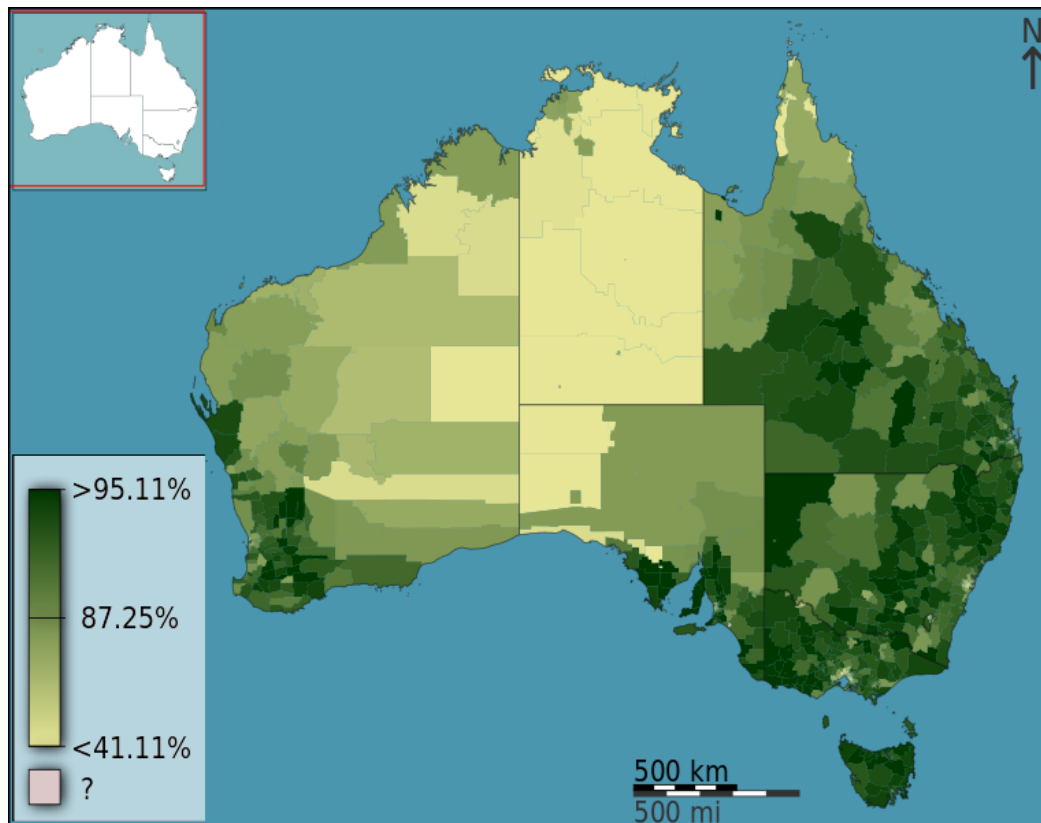


Figure 2.1: The spread of English-only speakers across Australia

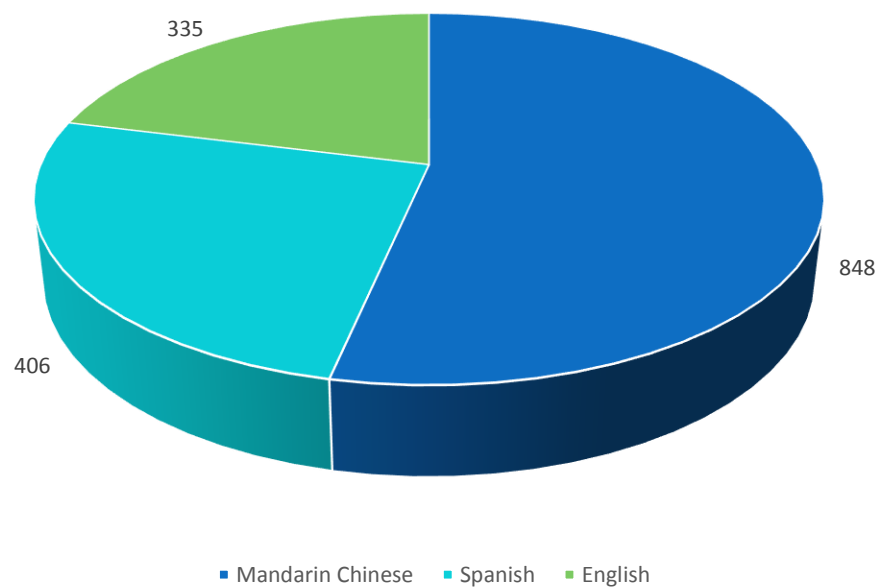


Figure 2.2: The top three most widely spoken languages, by first language speakers (millions)



language subject, the lowest enrolment of the eight key learning areas (Fullarton et al., 2003). Despite receiving funding and political support, languages education enrolment figures remained low between 1990 and 2001, with only Japanese experiencing an increase of student enrolment rates from 2.2% in 1993 to 2.7% in 2001 (Fullarton et al., 2003). The period from 1990 to 2001 saw overall language enrolments remain steady and small, with only 10 percent of the Year 12 cohort choosing a second language subject. Declines in traditional languages were matched by increases in Asian languages (Fullarton et al., 2003). These figures regarding steady enrolment rates and the shift in focus from European to Asian languages are also reported by the AEF (2014), demonstrating that this is still the current situation.

Policy challenges are one of the main issues facing Australia's languages education. Although Languages are included as one of the Key Learning Areas in the Australian Curriculum, it is clearly stated that not all areas are afforded the same value, with the priority given to mathematics and English. This is demonstrated by the Melbourne Declaration (MCEETYA, 2008) which stated that "the learning areas are not of equal importance at all year levels" (p. 14) and Fernandaz (2008), who explained that for Languages, "its struggle for acceptance as a legitimate area in its own right is ongoing" (p. 1). Furthermore, Scarino (2014) argued that when the 'crowded curriculum' issue is raised, Languages is often the easy target for reducing the crowding. In Australian education, there is no current requirement for the provision of languages education beyond Years 7 and 8 (AEF, 2014). Furthermore, Language curricula do not mandate time allocations, instead they are indicative and can be implemented by each school or jurisdiction according to their conditions, so students may experience an increase or decrease in the curricula's recommended

languages education time (AEF, 2014). According to Bense (2015), compared to other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries Australian students only spend half as much time studying a second language, with only 60 and 100 hours allocated for primary and secondary programs respectively (AEF, 2014). This is compounded by the fact that the new curriculum spans Foundation to Year 10, whereas in nearly all other OECD countries, students complete their education in Year 12 with at least one second language, receiving an additional two years of languages study. Discussing the challenges in NSW in regards to languages education, Flohm (2016, cited in Munro, 2016) stated that the mandated 100 hours of languages education in Years 7 and 8 is “tokenistic” (para 12), and believes that the state’s lack of strategic policy or plan for languages education will lead to further enrolment decline. In comparison, in European countries, languages education is valued, compulsory and in demand, substantive and sustained, and there are highly qualified language teachers (Education, Audiovisual and Cultural Executive Agency [EACEA], 2012, as cited in AEF, 2011). Many countries which do not have English as a national language allocate two to four hours per week per language to their languages education (AEF, 2014) which further demonstrates the lack of provision regarding time for Australian students.

In his review of the Australian Curriculum, in regards to Language curricula and goals, Cole (2007) argued that to reach the stated goal of significantly increasing student enrolments in second language subjects, the delivery of languages education will require a significant change itself. Accordingly, this is because:

Resources are inadequate, qualified teachers of LOTE are scarce,  
opportunities to use second languages are limited, [and] a culture of

valuing a second language does not exist. Untangling what are the causes and what are the symptoms of this failure to ignite students' interest in second language learning is complex. (Cole, 2007, pp. 8-9)

Cole (2007) suggested that in Australian education too many languages are offered, providing a disjointed learning pathway for students. He recommended that second language learning be limited to a core group of languages (two Asian and two European) so that second language communities of students can be developed in which students are able to practise their skills in conversation, as well as targeted teacher training and resource provision to hence deliver a quality education (Cole, 2007). Director of the Asia Education Foundation (AEF), Kathe Kirby (2016, as cited in Vukovic, 2016), argued that Australia should focus on just two languages like overseas models of languages education, a focus which, like Cole (2007), she argued would assist in addressing the issues of teacher training and professional learning. However, Scarino (2014), who was involved in planning the Languages framework, explained that making the national curriculum inclusive of all languages was “based on a view of justice for all and respect for linguistic diversity” (p. 296). Those involved in the discussion who favoured the focus to be on a small number of languages were described as having the view that less languages reduces the complexity of provision and the simplification allowing the implementation of sustainable language programmes from K – 12 (Scarino, 2014). Although reducing the amount of languages taught would allow a more manageable and sustainable languages education programme, it is at the exclusion of other languages, and this relates to Scarino's (2014) previous argument regarding the Asian language focus. She argued that focusing on a small selection of languages ignores the “diverse

languages used by the local community – languages that are part of Australia’s linguistic and cultural resources that should be maintained and developed, and languages that are an integral part of local people’s identities” (p. 293). Therefore, the new Languages curriculum was developed to include a diverse range of languages.

According to Scarino (2014) for the past twenty five years the term ‘policy’ in general languages education has been replaced with ‘plans’, ‘strategies’ and ‘programmes’, which she argued “do not constitute a policy and do not hold the same sense of mandate or commitment” (p. 292), and this is where one of the major challenges for languages education lies. Although the NALSSP program initially saw rises in Chinese language enrolments, since 2010 they began to decline again (AEF, 2014), suggesting that funding initiatives are not the solution, at least as an exclusive measure, to solving the challenges in our languages education. According to the AEF (2014) report, “the relatively stable enrolment numbers for senior secondary languages nationally indicates that current conditions in systems and schools are not conducive to building and sustaining student demand for languages” (p.13). While this is certainly true, in the present research study it was hypothesised that there was demand for languages education, however there were barriers preventing the uptake of language subjects. Therefore, in this thesis it is argued that the current conditions in systems and schools are also not conducive to *meeting the demand* and *enabling* students to study an elective second language. Additionally, the AEF (2014) report posited that:

Student demand for languages at Years 11 and 12 is inextricably linked to senior secondary certification structures in Australia. The creation of optimum conditions for students to select languages at the point of

senior secondary subject choice will be essential to scaling up enrolments. (p. 13)

This argument for the creation of optimum conditions is an integral point, not only in senior secondary languages education but in all Years in which language subjects are non-compulsory. This is demonstrated by the factors which affect students' subject choices at school, and how these impact on the uptake of elective second language subjects. Factors include motivations which influence student enrolment in an elective L2, and barriers which prevent enrolment.

## **2.4 Factors affecting students' subject choice**

There are a diverse range of factors which affect students' subject choices, and often it is a combination of factors which influence their decisions as opposed to a single reason. There is substantial literature in the areas of students' subject choice and decision theory, however the literature review for the present study focused on the factors which affect students' decisions solely for languages education. For research concerning overall subject choice, see Rodeiro (2007) and Jin, Muriel, and Sibieta (2011) for research conducted in England, and Fullarton and Ainley (2000) and Fullarton et al. (2003) for research within the Australian context. This section first discusses the motivations of why students do or do not choose an elective L2, which are categorised under eight main themes: 'travel', 'desire to communicate', 'future orientations', 'interest', 'historical orientations', 'external influences' and 'gender'. This is followed by factors which act as barriers preventing students from enrolling, which includes the three themes 'availability', 'language learning pathways', and 'subject choice and priority'.

### 2.4.1 Motivations

Motivations which influence students' enrolment decisions regarding elective second language learning include motivational factors to continue or discontinue. It is important to consider that "no one factor can be singled out as decisive on its own – it is likely that a constellation of factors converge to determine decisions" (Spence-Brown, 2014, p. 13). This is supported by Schmidt's (2011) finding that the three fundamental factors regarding students' tertiary German study motivation only accounted for 43.28% of the variance, highlighting the diversity of factors which influence students' learning decisions.

#### 2.4.1.1 *Travel*

Travel is a prominent theme in many studies, with many students citing it as a reason to learn a second language. Kertesz (2011) reported that travel was the overwhelming motivating factor influencing senior secondary students in Tasmania to study Asian languages, with approximately 95% of students citing this reason. Nearly 40% of participants in Moloney and Harbon's (2015) study indicated that they wanted to travel to countries which speak the target language. This indicates a possible source of motivation to continue their languages study, and relates to Dörnyei's Ideal L2 Self in so far as the assumption that students may be envisioning themselves using their acquired L2 skills when travelling. Investigating boys and second language learning, travel ranked fifth and seventh respectively as a motivating factor in Hajdu (2005) and Ren's (2009) studies. Senior secondary students in Spence-Brown's (2014) study ranked travel as the second highest major influence for continuation. According to students in Kohler and Curnow's (2007) investigation, languages were perceived to be important in regards to travel, either on holiday or for exchange trips. Participants in

Lo Bianco and Aliani's (2013) study suggested possible travel advantages when considering the benefits of second language learning. The motivating factor of travel is directly linked to students' desires to communicate in the target language.

#### *2.4.1.2 Desire to communicate*

The ability to communicate in another language for a variety of reasons can be a strong motivating factor for language learning continuation, especially as it is a measurable goal. The desire to communicate is often expressed as an interaction with native speakers of the language, although it can often be envisioned as providing other benefits. For example, participants in Moloney and Harbon's (2015) study expressed desires to be able to speak a second language, with the beliefs that there were potential opportunities to come from being able to do so and the view of being more 'worldly/cultural'. This is consistent with Rothman, Zhao and Lonsdale's (2014) study in which a key reason for senior secondary students to study a language was cross cultural communication and intercultural understanding. This benefit was suggested by participants in Lo Bianco and Aliani's (2013) investigation, as well as communication benefits gained from learning a second language. A strong influential factor in Kohler and Curnow's (2007) study was students' desire to communicate with relatives, and this is linked to Schmidt's (2011) second fundamental factor for learning German, which was described as the wish to be able to communicate in German-speaking countries for work, travel or study. The desire to communicate can also be referenced to learners' future orientations, in which they envision using a second language in their future studies or careers.

### 2.4.1.3 *Future orientations*

Future orientations refers to students' plans for further studies or their career pathways. The need for a language for future plans can be another motivating factor, however if students do not perceive the relevance of an L2 to their future orientations it acts as a demotivating factor as they prefer to study subjects related to their plans. Davies, Telhaj, Hutton, Adnett, and Coe (2008) and Kalakoski and Nurmi (1998) both suggested that secondary students choose subjects which create pathways to future careers and studies. This often means that languages get relegated to the end of subject preference lists, unless students see clear future benefits for studying a language subject, or have careers specifically related to L2s. Schmidt's (2011) third fundamental factor for tertiary German study was the future career benefits to be gained from it, with a number of students citing reasons which indicated the belief that German was an important language, especially in business, and this could lead to professional advantages. This is consistent with findings from Spence-Brown's (2014) study, in which 57% of participants cited 'helpfulness to future career' as a moderate or major influence on their decision to continue their senior secondary Japanese studies. In contrast, only a small number of students in Kohler and Curnow's (2007) study referred to career benefits, and only in a generalised manner. This is similar to findings from Lo Bianco and Aliani (2013), who conducted a five year investigation into key stakeholders' perception of languages teaching, one component which included surveying secondary students in west Melbourne school settings. In comparison to Spence-Brown's (2014) study, students in Lo Bianco and Aliani's (2013) study were uncertain whether the language they were learning could be utilised



in their future careers, indicating that none of their participants envisioned being in a profession that would be enhanced by language skills.

Spence-Brown (2014), Rothman et al. (2014), and Kohler and Curnow (2007) had similar findings regarding discontinuation reasons relating to future orientations. According to Spence-Brown (2014), continuing students were contemplating discontinuing their tertiary Japanese studies due to other subjects being perceived as more useful, while students who had discontinued their studies cited reasons related to the relevance of the subject to their current lives and to their future careers or opportunities for language use. Senior secondary students cited irrelevance to future careers and studies as reasons for not enrolling in an L2 at school in Rothman et al.'s (2014) investigation, and discontinuing participants in Kohler and Curnow's (2007) study referred to a lack of importance or relevance to their futures as a reason for choosing other subjects instead of a language. At times this was specifically referenced to their future career pathways.

In regards to relevance, Taylor and Marsden (2014) created an intervention to promote students' uptake of second languages when it became non-compulsory in English schools. Students were aged 13 and 14 and received one of two types of intervention to encourage them to recognise the relevance of L2 study. One of the discoveries that Taylor and Marsden (2014) made was that students' perceptions of L2s were already well developed and they had decided upon their enrolment six months prior to subjects being formally chosen. Furthermore, 75% of students did not change their minds from their initial decision about whether or not to enrol in an L2 after being involved in the intervention. Taylor and Marsden (2014) stressed the significance of students' perceptions already being set before the intervention, and

their findings demonstrate that reaction to the intervention (positive or negative) could be predicted from students' perceptions of lessons and their attitudes to L2 learning. According to the data, students were more likely to continue with an L2 if they perceived second languages important for themselves, easy, and had positive attitudes towards L2 learning (Taylor & Marsden, 2014).

Moloney and Harbon (2015) explored the transition from senior secondary to tertiary language, which included examining the reasons why students continued their language learning at secondary school. Moloney and Harbon (2015) found that students were expressing attitudes towards second language learning that indicated the formation of Dörnyei's (2005) Ideal L2 Selves (explained in Section 2.5.2.1), as they were discussing future aspirations and L2 identities. The findings of this study allowed Moloney and Harbon (2015) to suggest that these students exhibited a relationship between their self-efficacy as strong language learners, motivation and their visions of 'possible selves', and that their "nurturing" (p. 10) of these possible future selves appeared to have provided sufficient motivation to continue with their languages studies throughout secondary school. For the students who did plan to continue their study of languages into the tertiary sector, Moloney and Harbon (2015) argued that it appeared their language learning had a positive impact on their attitudes, as these students expressed their desires to continue their involvement with their L2. The development of an Ideal L2 Self suggests that students had an interest in the language that they were learning, and their positive experiences also indicate that they were interested in what they were learning.

#### **2.4.1.4 Interest**

Interest is a strong motivating factor, as the extent to which students are interested in a language can determine their enrolment in the subject in a second language. Previous studies have generally focused on motivational factors influencing study in a specific second language. One study which examined students' motivations to continue or discontinue a range of languages was conducted by Kohler and Curnow (2007), who found that many students cited personal interest as a reason for continuing their language studies. According to Kertesz (2011), students were motivated to study Asian languages at senior secondary level due to finding the language interesting and exotic. In regards to learning German at a tertiary level, Schmidt (2011) found that there was a clear dominance of the factor of influence regarding interest in language and culture, with 27.66% of the variance explained by this factor compared to less than 10% for the other two factors. Ren (2009) found that boys in his study ranked 'lack of interest' as the highest motivational influence to discontinue learning Chinese. Spence-Brown (2014) and de Kretser and Spence-Brown (2010) investigated Japanese learners' motivational influences, and both studies found that interest was an important factor. Spence-Brown (2014) reported that it was one of the top three major influences for students to continue their tertiary Japanese study, while de Kretser and Spence-Brown (2010) found that an interest in the language or culture further enhanced students' enjoyment of Japanese study. When students are enjoying their learning they are more likely to continue, therefore this and other prior learning experiences can be a major influence in whether and for how long they choose to study an elective L2 at school.

#### *2.4.1.5 Historical Orientation*

Historical orientation refers to students' past engagement with and experiences of learning a second language which influence their motivation to continue or discontinue their languages education. The AEF (2014) report cited that without a high level of engagement, which comes from "a keen interest, enjoyment and success in learning a language" (p. 3), students are unlikely to continue their languages education. This theme consists of the two sub themes 'enjoyment' and 'difficulty and past achievement'.

#### *Enjoyment*

Enjoyment has been highlighted by previous studies as one of the main motivating factors to study a second language. Spence-Brown (2014) found that this was the top motivating factor for students continuing their senior secondary Japanese study. Enjoyment was also a prominent theme in both Busse and William's (2010) study, with all twelve interview participants citing it as a motivating influence, and Lo Bianco and Aliani's (2013) investigation, in which more than three quarters of secondary students reported enjoyment of learning.

This factor is especially important for boys, as according to Ren's (2009) results the second highest reason for boys discontinuing Chinese studies was that they believed it to be boring. However, Lamb (2001, cited in McCall, 2011) found that it was not the language itself but the content that boys were referring to as boring. This is heartening, as this perception can be altered by changing the learning content to engage boys. To this end, McCall's (2011) study explored the effect on boys' French engagement and motivation by creating football themed resources by which teachers could deliver the language curriculum. The results clearly demonstrated the

significant impact that curriculum content has on student enjoyment, with both boys and girls indicating an increase in enjoyment of their French learning. Of particular interest, boys responded that they put more effort into their language learning when using the football resources compared to previous lessons (McCall, 2011). While Kissau, Kolano, and Wang (2010) warned of the risk of tailoring learning to suit boys at the detriment of girls' learning and engagement, McCall's (2011) study found that the integration of activities that were still football themed, but did not focus on the actual aspect of playing football, ensured that students who did not like football were still included in the learning. Results suggested that the majority of students were more engaged when using the resources than they previously were in class, regardless of whether or not they liked football. From this study, it can be clearly shown that "the attitude of boys towards French can be heavily influenced by relating their language learning to a topic that they are interested in and which is relevant to their everyday lives" (McCall, 2011, p. 6). This is linked to the finding by Carr and Pauwels (2006) that boys were less enthused about their high school learning, with comments suggesting a disconnection between learning and the real world.

In terms of positive experiences, Moloney and Harbon (2015) reported from their findings that a positive exchange experience and positive school language experience were influential factors in regard to students' continuation of language learning. Another positive experience, enjoyment of learning, was a major influential factor for continuing students in Kohler and Curnow's (2007) study. Consistent with these studies, Rothman, Zhao, and Lonsdale (2014) found that senior secondary students' high levels of enjoyment correlated with high levels of academic success and perceptions of ease for language learning. This notion of subject ease or difficulty

is another strong influential factor, as students who are not achieving or perceiving to be progressing are at a higher risk of discontinuing their studies.

#### *Difficulty and past achievement*

Languages is often seen as a hard subject, and this difficulty, either as a perception or experience, is a common reason for discontinuation of study. Orton (2008) reported that Chinese learners were deterred from study because of a lack of proficiency regarding achievement in the language, with it being much harder to acquire than Indonesian, Japanese or Korean, and even more so than European languages. This is demonstrated by the Institute of Foreign Languages, which estimated that to gain proficiency, an English language learner would need to spend around 660 hours for French compared to 2500 hours for Chinese (Vukovic, 2016). Additional issues that students learning Chinese as a second language face are the competition with background and native speakers, who are often combined in the same class, therefore making it difficult to achieve well in exams, and the insufficient amount of teaching time for an intrinsically difficult language for English speakers (Orton, 2008). The difficulty that students experience learning a second language is compounded by the teaching structure of Australia's languages education, in which the same amount of hours are offered for all languages, despite the understanding that some languages require more hours to reach proficiency (Kirby, 2016, cited in Vukovic, 2016).

A number of students in Lo Bianco and Aliani's (2013) investigation remarked on the difficulty of learning a language and the effort required, which is consistent with findings from other studies. Perceived difficulty was cited as the top reason for students discontinuing their Asian language studies once they were not compulsory (Kertesz, 2011). The most popular demotivating factor from Ren's (2009)

findings was that boys thought that Chinese was too hard and therefore did not want to continue with their learning. Carr and Pauwels (2006) explained that “the sustained nature of the kind of application required is identified by boys as one of the hardest aspects of learning a language” (p. 78) with the cumulative and progressive nature of language learning meaning that it is difficult to focus on different subjects according to immediate priorities such as assignments and exams. Martin and Jansen (2012) found a strong correlation between nine of the 12 provided main reasons for discontinuing, which were summarised collectively as “performing unexpectedly poorly in the course” (p. 179). The nine reasons were: not being satisfied with progress; expectations not being met; not enjoying the course content; not liking the way the course was taught; finding the course too difficult; finding the workload too high; not receiving good grades; falling behind in one’s grades and unable to catch up; and feeling that other students in the class speak the language better (Martin & Jansen, 2012, p. 179). This is similar to Graham’s (2004) study, in which the fourth most frequently cited reason for students to discontinue their French learning was that they ‘were no good at it’, which contrasted with their expected scores as assessed by their teachers and themselves. These participants were high achieving French students, however while they acceded that they were able to obtain good grades, many commented that they would not be able to hold a conversation in French. Many students, especially girls, underestimated their levels of expected achievement (Graham, 2004), with this finding demonstrating students’ low self-efficacy in language learning. Graham’s (2004) study found that Year 11 students (who are in their last compulsory language year) rated ability as the highest attribute for overall success in their French language learning, with Year 12 students (in their first non-

compulsory language year) indicating effort marginally over ability as the highest attribute. However, for students in Year 13 (two years of non-compulsory French), effort and strategy were seen as the most important attributes for success, with only eight percent of students indicating ability as the determinant for overall success. This suggests that intermediate students do not see the importance of implementing effective strategies for greater achievements, believing that natural ability is the main determinant of 'being good' at French (Graham, 2004). Students who believe that ability is the determinant of success are therefore at risk of discontinuing if they are performing poorly in their language studies, instead of recognising that it is their actions which determine their success. In comparison to students discontinuing due to doubting their abilities, participants in Spence-Brown's (2014) study cited the reason of Japanese being a 'worthwhile challenge' as the fourth top reason for continuing, which indicated that some students may appreciate the difficulty of language learning. Spence-Brown (2014) suggested that the population may have been represented by conscientious students due to its voluntary nature. This is similar to findings from Busse and Walter (2013) and Schmidt (2014) that students were partly motivated to learn German by the intellectual challenge. According to Rothman et al. (2014), cognitive advantages were a major reason for their participants to study an elective L2. While these studies have demonstrated that students value the challenge of L2 learning, as Spence-Brown (2014) argued, despite some students being motivated by this challenge, this in itself indicates that they perceive languages study to be difficult.

These studies have indicated students' enjoyment levels and difficulty perceptions of second language learning, and Graham's (2004) study has highlighted the issue of self-efficacy which can affect students' desires to continue their studies.



This is where teacher encouragement is extremely important, as positive feedback can influence students to continue with elective L2 study. Parents and peers are also influencing factors, and can effect students' motivations for continuing or discontinuing.

#### *2.4.1.6 External influences*

Teachers, parents and friends are all external influences which can motivate students in a positive or negative manner in terms of second language learning. Both genders in Hajdu's (2005) study listed themselves, their parents and teachers as the highest motivating factors for second language learning, however differences emerged for the fourth highest factor, where 'career' and 'friends' were transposed for the boys and girls. The boys appeared to focus on the future, listing 'career' and 'travel' as their next motivating factors, compared to the girls who appeared to value communication and socialisation, listing 'friends' and 'travel' before 'career' (Hajdu, 2005). This indicates that females may be more influenced by their friends than males when choosing whether to continue or discontinue L2 studies. Family influence was the highest motivating factor for boys in early adolescence to continue learning Chinese as a second language at school (Ren, 2009), which is consistent with Hajdu's (2005) study, in which both boys and girls ranked parents as the second highest influential factor for choosing languages.

According to Ren's (2009) results, teachers were the second most important factor influencing boys to continue with their Chinese studies once they were no longer compulsory. Boys and girls in Hajdu's (2005) study ranked teachers the third highest motivating factor when choosing to study a second language at school. The factor of having a good language teacher was ranked as the fifth most influential

factor in Spence-Brown's (2014) study. Interestingly, factors relating to the teacher were found by Ren (2009) to be the third and fourth highest factors for discontinuing students, with 'poor quality of teachers' closely followed by 'bad teaching method'. Participants in Lo Bianco and Aliani's (2013) study reported discipline problems as a negative experience, as teachers could not control the class. The second highest factor found in Ren's (2009) study for student discontinuation was 'bad learning experience', which in some cases could have been attributed to the teacher. These findings demonstrate the influence that teachers have on students' motivation to continue or discontinue their language learning. Native speakers were listed as both a positive and negative experience, as students commented that native speakers taught the correct pronunciation and knew the culture extremely well, however at times they did not speak English well and were difficult to understand (Lo Bianco & Aliani, 2013).

The main external factors influencing students' enrolment in elective L2s have been found to be family, teachers and friends. Peers can be extremely influential, especially in terms of whether they consider languages to be a feminine subject. Boys are especially influenced by their peers, if languages study is perceived to be a 'soft' or girly choice.

#### *2.4.1.7 Gender*

There is international concern about the gender gap in second language uptake across English-speaking countries, with a number of studies investigating the apparent lack of motivation from males to learn an L2. Carr and Pauwels (2006) explained that "post-compulsory language study is a fragile enterprise and one which is significantly skewed in gender terms ... [it] continues to be an under-scribed curriculum option,

refused by the majority of boys” (p. 20). Carr and Pauwels (2006) described gender in second language learning as a social construct and key cultural organising principle, although gender as a biological concept is often cited by research participants, demonstrating that the topic of gender has multiple aspects and generates varied understandings.

The gender gap has been explored in many studies, with both similar and contrasting findings. Kissau et al. (2010) explained that “despite increasing enrollment and popularity in L2 programs, there is growing angst amongst L2 educators in the United States that a large percentage of American youth lack motivation to learn another language” (p. 704) with this angst especially directed at the lack of male representation in L2 subjects. In their examination of gender enrolments in four Anglophone countries, Carr and Pauwels (2006) found that “boys demonstrate similar levels of disengagement and disinterest in foreign language study irrespective of whether they study in Australia, Scotland, New Zealand or the United Kingdom” (p. 19). This further highlights the problem of second language value by students, especially boys, with English as a first language, and is demonstrated by a number of studies (Carr, 2002; Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005; Kissau, 2006; Pavy, 2006; Williams, Burden, & Lanvers, 2002). Furthermore, despite languages being harder than other traditional ‘masculine’ subject areas such as maths and sciences, academic success in the language class does not engender a ‘cool’ status as it remains a ‘soft’ option purely in terms of gender acceptability (Carr & Pauwels, 2006). In their study into American students learning Spanish as a second language, Kissau et al. (2010) found that while some of their results aligned with findings of other studies, there were also some differences. Only four of the 10 motivational factors tested in this

study were found to have a statistical significance between gender: motivational intensity; integrative orientation; instrumental orientation; and desire (Kissau et al., 2010). Other studies which found males to have positive attitudes regarding second language learning include Kissau, Quach, and Wang (2009), Carr and Pauwels (2006), and Kissau and Salsas (2013), and while many studies reported participants' attitudes of languages being a feminine study (for example Carr & Pauwels, 2006; Kissau, 2006), in McCall's (2011) study, participants highly disagreed with this notion. This is consistent with Hajdu's (2005) study in which students believed girls and boys had equal opportunities for success in language learning, and that girls were not more suited to languages nor had better communication skills than their male counterparts.

The studies highlighted here demonstrate that there can be large divides between genders when it comes to attitudes about second language learning, however there have also been studies which have found boys to have positive attitudes to languages and that there is no gender stigma surrounding the subject in terms of being considered an effeminate choice. The results from some of these studies indicate that the gender subject stereotype may be a barrier to learning for boys. This, along with other systemic and personal barriers, can prevent students from enrolling in an elective L2 regardless of whether they desire to do so or not.

### **2.4.2 Barriers**

This section outlines the barriers to learning a second language that students may experience. These preventative issues include both systemic and personal barriers, as it can be a school construct which affects uptake or students' own situations.

Preventative barriers can be classified according to three main themes: ‘availability’, ‘language learning pathways’ and ‘subject choice and priority’.

#### *2.4.2.1 Availability*

The organisation of individual schools impact on students’ choices in terms of availability of classes, and Davies et al. (2008) believed that this is affected by the average popularity of subjects which is influenced by the students themselves. This is certainly the case to some extent, however there are a range of other organisational factors which affect the offering of elective second language subjects. Jin et al. (2011) explained that supply and demand are elements affecting subject offerings at schools, and found that data from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE) indicated that in 2004-05 just under 20% of Year 10 students were unable to enrol in their preferred subjects, citing unavailability as the dominant reason. This is similar to the AEF (2014) report on second language education which indicated that a major barrier for students was the inability to study their preferred language at their school, findings which were informed by survey results of senior secondary students conducted by Rothman et al. (2014). According to Gould-Drakeley (2016, cited in Munro, 2016), minimum class sizes were an issue affecting the offering of languages classes in government schools, with a set amount of enrolments required. Rothman et al. (2014) argued that this is a problem in all sectors, and discourages the enrolment of some students. When discussing differentiation, the AEF (2014) report explained that students are often grouped in the same class regardless of their language background and learning requirements. In relation to this, school principals in Rothman et al.’s (2014) study indicated that the demands of the curriculum “make it difficult to offer more than a ‘taste’ for a language, particularly in the junior secondary years” (p. 59),

which highlights the issues of students not perceiving languages as worthwhile, and not experiencing enough progression to feel as though they are succeeding with their learning. Furthermore, teacher availability can affect the languages which are offered by schools.

There has been a shortage of language teachers for decades, leading to Lo Bianco's (2009) argument that "teacher supply is arguably the most significant challenge facing languages education in Australia" (p. 42). This is supported by Rothman et al. (2014), who argued that access to quality teaching is the biggest barrier for schools to provide a solid languages education to their students. This is a problem across all schools and sectors, although the primary sector is more complicated as language teachers are more likely to work part time in a number of schools with limited contact hours (Lo Bianco, 2009). This leads to a lack of integration of languages learning within the school curriculum along with a lack of subject value. Language teacher training remains the greatest issue, as it has been reported that there is a "yawning and never-breached gap between the announced aims of language policy and the paucity of planning effort to make available appropriately trained teachers in sufficient numbers" (Lo Bianco, 2009, p. 42). Conquering this challenge would have the greatest effect on long-term improvements in Australian languages education, as Lo Bianco (2009) believed that if the federal government addressed this issue in tertiary teacher education, teachers would graduate with languages competency that would greatly support the languages programs in schools. According to a report for the Australian Language and Literacy Council in 1996, it was estimated the number of trained language teachers needed to increase by 500% to adequately address the shortage, yet a decade later, maintaining teacher

supply for languages provision in schools remained the biggest challenge (Lo Bianco, 2009). Flohm (2016, cited in Munro, 2016) argued that in NSW there is a lack of primary language teachers, compared to an oversupply of secondary language teachers. Liddicoat et al. (2007) attributed the lack of primary language teachers to teacher education degrees which do not allow students to develop their language skills and qualify as language teachers, along with poor employment conditions which affect the retention rates of language teachers.

The availability of classes and teachers can both act as major barriers preventing students from learning a second language, especially their preferred language. The availability of teachers affects the range of languages which can be offered at schools, and often in primary schools the availability of a language teacher will dictate the language that the school offers. This becomes a major issue for maintaining learning continuity and establishing pathways between school transitions, allowing students to build on their previously developed language skills.

#### *2.4.2.2 Language learning pathways*

Second language learning pathways are critical for students' continuation of learning. Also known as *articulation*, Kleinsasser (2001) explained that "articulation as it relates to LOTE instruction deals with the availability of a program of study to assist learners in becoming proficient LOTE users. This usually means coordination of LOTE programs between primary, secondary, and tertiary learning environments" (p. 194). If students cannot see that there are pathways for them to follow with future L2 learning it can appear to be a pointless current undertaking. This is supported by Steigler-Peters, Moran, Piccioli, and Chesterton (2003), who argued that the misalignment of languages between primary and secondary schools results in the

impression that students' languages learning is not valued, and they are unable to continue enhancing the skills they have spent up to seven years learning. This is also argued by Flohm (2016, cited in Munro, 2016), who believed that a lack of focus on languages in the primary school years contributes to the enrolment decline, along with a lack of continuity from K – 12. The transition between primary, secondary and senior secondary schools are often where students become disheartened or disenchanted with their L2 studies, as the lack of pathways often results in all learners placed in a beginner's class regardless of ability or prior learning, or forced to change languages (Kirby, 2016, cited in Vukovic, 2016; Kleinsasser, 2001; Lo Bianco, 2009). When considering that articulation may occur between both primary and secondary transitions, the L2 attrition rate among Australian schools is unsurprising. This is highlighted by Lo Bianco and Aliani (2013) who argued that students' boredom and repetition concerns lead to cynicism about policy and its intended aims, which further damages second language learning perceptions. Principals in Rothman et al.'s (2014) study perceived transitions between primary and secondary schools as a major concern, with continuity cited as an issue. In his report into second language education in Australia, Lo Bianco (2009) stated that "this problem of transition compounds the problem of articulation, and while far from universal, they are common enough problems to bring a great deal of languages education planning in Australia into disrepute" (p. 48). The 1999 NALSAS report (Norris, 1999) into learner pathways for second language learning found that there was a "very obvious lack of provision for continuous, quality LOTE learning in Australia" (p. 92), which suggests that many students would experience the problem of articulation, and this is highlighted by Steigler-Peters et al. (2003) who explained one of the common



problems is when the languages taught in feeder primary schools do not match those of the local secondary school, thus forcing a language change.

While a change of language can be beneficial for some students, Lo Bianco (2009) believed that “for the most part lack of continuity and lack of continuation preclude students from achieving advanced linguistic competency and send all the wrong messages about the value of language learning” (p. 48). This resonates with the findings of a study conducted by Kleinsasser (2001), who explored the issue of articulation from primary to secondary school. Lack of articulation in second language programs, occurring especially in transitions, leads to students repeating previously learned content and thus becoming bored and disenchanted with language learning. Kleinsasser (2001) found that just under half of the students who participated in the research chose not to continue with the same language they had learnt prior to their transition. The reasons provided were largely negative, with students stating that they found the language too difficult, were tired of learning it, disliked or lacked interest in the language, or wanted a new start (Kleinsasser, 2001). The students who chose to continue with their previous language were placed in classes with others who had no background in that L2. The NALSAS report (Norris, 1999) found L2 pathways to be a serious issue, stating that there was “a real paucity of pathways for the school LOTE learners of Australia” (p. 92). In this report, many students described learning the same language skills each year, with some even having the same textbook in primary school and secondary school. This lack of extension for students further compounds the articulation problems, depicting that there are often no pathways that build upon students’ prior abilities in L2 classes. Even when there are pathways between primary feeders and local secondary schools,

it is problematic, as “the issue of aligning curriculum content and providing for cumulative and sequenced learning generally remains a significant challenge” (Steigler-Peters et al., 2003, p. 31). Tolbert (2003) explained that with the Primary Languages Implementation Program providing students with four years of languages learning in primary school, Tasmania had time to consider national and international approaches and develop a professional development program to assist the transition to secondary school where students’ prior learning would be valued and built upon. The strategies identified for the professional development program were tested in 2000, when the first cohort of students with four years of primary language learning entered secondary schools (Tolbert, 2003). While there were positive reports from teachers and students alike, there remained issues that needed to be addressed to provide the best possible transition experience. Effective transition strategies included checklists of prior learning, interschool visits to observe the other sector, seminars, and the promotion and support of school clusters and networks (Tolbert, 2003). While some schools were able to provide separate classes based on language ability, in composite classes differentiation was a key strategy, with teachers required to extend students with prior knowledge and also cater for beginners. In summary of the program, Tolbert (2003) stated that:

Evidence indicates that the transition can only be successful when models for primary and secondary teachers' cooperation have been worked out and opportunities for cross-sector professional development and communication have been provided. System support is necessary to promote strategies for successful transition within the local context. (p. 27)

Although this professional development program is no longer in effect, it provides a working model for the next attempts at addressing the transition between primary and secondary schools, which will be essential with the implementation of the national languages curriculum and the future government view of mandatory languages learning for all students in years 5 – 10 (Australian Government Department of Education, 2014a). The Australian Curriculum: Languages has been developed with pathways appropriate to the dominant cohort of learners in terms of each specific language in the Australian context (ACARA, 2014d). Therefore, most languages in the curriculum have one pathway from Years Foundation – 10, but allow for cohorts continuing from primary school as well as cohorts commencing in Year 7, while for Chinese, there are three pathways: first language learners, background language learners and second language learners. The Framework for Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages also has three pathways, which are the same except for the second pathway, which in this Framework is for revival language learners (ACARA, 2014d).

The research literature concerning learner pathways both nationally and locally have been examined, providing an overview of the issues facing streamlined languages education. The issue of articulation would likely result in the demotivation of students and partially explain student attrition rates once L2 learning is no longer compulsory, as motivation is a critical factor in second language learning.

Articulation is an issue which affects the availability of language subjects, and impacts upon students' choice of language. A common barrier to students' language study is that their preferred language is not offered at their school, and this becomes an important factor when considering subject choice and priority, which is also

influenced by future study and career pathways. Prerequisites, career relevance and stronger interests are all subject choice and priority barriers which affect students' continuation of second language study.

#### *2.4.2.3 Subject Choice and Priority*

There are a range of personal and systemic barriers related to students' decisions regarding choice of subjects and their assigned priority. The number of electives allowed and the languages available for study are two school-based barriers, while Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) points are a systemic barrier at a higher level. Personal barriers include the prioritisation of subjects for careers, future study, or other interests. These factors all influence students' enrolment in an elective L2.

School timetabling in terms of the number of electives available for enrolment is a major factor affecting student enrolment in languages subjects. AEF (2014) research suggested that enrolments in languages increased when students were able to enrol in five or six subjects in Year 12, as demonstrated when South Australia reduced requirements to only four subjects, which resulted in a sharp decline in elective language enrolment. According to Fullarton et al. (2003), enrolment trends from 1990 to 2001 demonstrated a shift towards vocational oriented subjects as opposed to specialisation in traditional learning areas. This is important when regarding language enrolments, as languages subjects are rarely considered by students to be vocationally beneficial, and even when their value is recognised or appreciated, career subjects take priority. This is supported by Rothman et al. (2014) who argued that for senior secondary students who participated in their study "a perceived lack of usefulness for future study/career" (p. 4) was a strong factor not choosing an elective L2 subject. Davies et al. (2008) suggested that occupational

trajectories can have an effect on students' subject choice, and that their career aspirations do not always reflect their actual ability and potential for achievement. This is in comparison to Miller and Budd's (1999) findings which suggested that there was no relationship between subject choice and future career for British students. Furthermore, it was found that there were no age or gender differences for subject selection, suggesting that stereotyping was not an influence on students' subject preferences (Miller & Budd, 1999). However, like Davies et al. (2008), Kalakoski and Nurmi (1998) also suggested that students in the middle years of adolescence demonstrate exploration and commitment to their future education and occupation, especially prior to educational transitions which appear to encourage students' identity exploration in relation to these future domains. This is similar to Moloney and Harbon's (2015) observation of the critical point at the end of secondary school when students need to make important decisions based on their subject selection for senior secondary school, and that this decision-making process of subject selection "involves looking ahead to the longer-term language goals, and the young adult identity, or future self that the student is envisioning for him/herself" (p. 11). Future orientations are a strong influential factor, as students need to take a range of options into account, and a language subject does not always fit well in combination with other more relevant subjects.

Subject prioritisation for careers or future study is a strong influence, however another barrier which students report as a deterrent for language study is the languages offered by their school. This is a major factor for discontinuation, with Zammit (1992) finding that 30% of participants in her study cited this as a reason. Students in Kohler and Curnow's (2007) study also referred to not studying an

elective L2 because their desired language was unavailable. These findings are also consistent with those of Rothman et al. (2014), which indicates that students are a lot less motivated to study an elective L2 if it is not their preferred language choice.

There are a number of factors which influence students' second language enrolment and motivation to learn. Moloney and Harbon (2015) suggested that positive learning situations and academic achievement, along with the development of an Ideal L2 Self, are three important components which encourage students to continue their second language learning. When these are absent, or there are personal or systemic barriers influencing students' subject choices, students are more likely to discontinue their languages study. Understanding student motivation for languages education has long been a popular area of research, and the development of this research is explored in the next section of the chapter.

## **2.5 Researching the Challenges**

The challenges for languages education have now been outlined, which leads to developing an understanding of the research that is conducted regarding these challenges. The focus is motivational research, due to the desire to understand students' decisions for second language enrolment, and this scope is narrowed to the area of second language motivation research in the field of second language acquisition (SLA). This section begins by defining the term 'motivation' before providing a short account of the research development in second language motivation, followed by a detailed description of the theoretical framework for the present study and how it was created in line with previous theories. The section concludes with a presentation of the latest developments and future trends in this area.

### 2.5.1 Motivation

At the surface the term ‘motivation’ appears to be relatively straightforward, with many people able to recognise and comprehend the meaning. Individuals can certainly recognise the feeling of motivation, often referring to it in terms of wanting or not wanting to do something. However, Dörnyei (2014a) explained that within the fields of psychology and applied linguistics, ‘motivation’ is a complex technical term spanning a broad spectrum of varying meanings, leading him to argue that “there have been serious doubts as to whether motivation is more than a rather obsolete umbrella term for a wide range of variables that have nothing to do with each other” (p. 519) due to the multiple ways that the term has been interpreted and applied within research. Essentially, the one thing that researchers do agree on regarding the definition of motivation is that it explains why people do the things that they do, with Dörnyei (2014a) explaining that “motivation determines the direction and magnitude of human behavior or, in other words, the choice of a particular action, the persistence with it, and the effort expended on it” (p. 519). This is similar to the definition provided by Ormrod (2012), who defined motivation as “an internal state that arouses us to action, pushes us in particular directions, and keeps us engaged in certain activities” (p. 426). This appears to be a clear definition, however the challenge is trying to conceptualise motivation because human behaviour is influenced by a variety of factors, some of which are occurring simultaneously. Dörnyei (2014a) argued that it has long been established that there are three areas of mental functioning: cognition, motivation and affect (emotions), therefore motivational constructs are based on the idea that the mind is a “highly integrated neural network, [where] motivation constantly interacts with cognitive and emotional issues” (p. 519)

and are complex in nature to allow for this interconnectedness. In the past decade, researchers in second language motivation have moved away from the traditional method of investigating motivation through a variety of individual factors and instead are looking at motivation as a dynamic and complex system which considers the learner as a whole.

### **2.5.2 L2 motivational research developmental history**

There is a long history of second language (L2) motivational research, with more than 50 years of continuous research which involved a number of developments, although most of this research investigated the learning of English as a second language as opposed to a range of different languages. Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) explained that this history can be divided into three distinct development stages, although the dates are only guidelines to demonstrate the changes of research focus, as much overlapping occurred between the periods. The social psychological period (1959 – 1990), began in Canada and is characterised by the work of Gardner and his associates; next, the cognitive-situated period (during the 1990s), characterised by research drawing upon cognitive theories in educational psychology; and finally the process-oriented period (2000 to current) which is characterised by work initiated by Dörnyei, Ushioda and their colleagues in Europe, with an interest in motivational change (Dörnyei, 2005). Table 2.1 provides an overview of the historical development, with Dörnyei & Ryan's (2015) book constituting the most recent discussion of this development. The concept of 'self' became a dominant research construct, and it was in this period that Dörnyei (2005) proposed the L2 Motivational Self System, an act which is described by Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) as "the most



influential self-specific motivation construct in SLA” (p. 86). In the decade that has passed since this significant event, research in the SLA field has flourished, with changing theoretical perspectives and new understandings emerging. One of the biggest changes regards the concept of ‘individual differences’ and after outlining the development of the L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS), this chapter will explore the restructuring of this concept within the examination of the current research agenda.

*Table 2.1: History of L2 motivational research development*

Period	Main points	Main theories
Social psychological (1959 – 1990)	Dominated by the work of Gardner and his associates	<i>Integrative/instrumental orientation</i> (Gardner and Lambert, 1972)
	Research based on the French-Canadian context	<i>Socio-educational model</i> (Gardner, 1974)
	Macro perspective – whole communities	<i>Socio-context model</i> (Clément, 1980)
Cognitive-situated (1990 – 2000)	Contemporary cognitive theories applied from the field of educational psychology	<i>Self-determination theory</i> (Noels, 2001; Noels, Clément & Pelletier, 2001; Noels, Pelletier, Clément & Vallerand, 2000)
	Situated approach	<i>Attribution theory</i> (Ushioda, 1996, 2001)
	Micro perspective – classrooms and individual learners and teachers	
Socio-dynamic (2000 – current)	Integrated approaches to understand the complexity of interrelated factors affecting motivation	<i>Process Model of L2 motivation</i> (Dörnyei and Ottó, 1998) <i>The L2 Motivational Self System</i> (Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei 2009)
	Future self-images to sustain motivation	<i>Vision and imagination theories</i> (Al-Shehri, 2009; Dörnyei & Chan, 2013; Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014; Ryan, 2006; Yashima, 2013)
	Concepts of vision and imagination	
	Complex dynamics systems perspective – exploring the system as a whole, not individual variables	<i>Directed Motivational Currents</i> (Dörnyei, Henry & Muir, 2016; Dörnyei, Ibrahim & Muir, 2015; Dörnyei, Muir & Ibrahim, 2014; Muir & Dörnyei, 2013)

### 2.5.2.1 *The L2 Motivational Self System*

First proposed in 2005, Dörnyei's (2005; 2009) L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS) is one of the most significant theories to emerge throughout the past fifty years of motivation research development. The L2MSS is presented in detail as it is the theory that is applied to the present study in terms of classifying motivational influences using the three components of the framework. Dörnyei (2009) explained that the L2MSS "represents a major reformation of previous motivational thinking by its explicit utilisation of psychological theories of the self, yet its roots are firmly set in previous research in the L2 field" (p. 9). This theory occurred through the combined effects of significant theoretical developments in the field of L2 research and mainstream psychology (Dörnyei, 2009). In the L2 field, Gardner's (1972) theory of integrativeness was seen to become less relevant to current language learning environments, as the spread of Global English meant that increasing amounts of the population were learning English as a second (or additional) language. The global status it was attaining made it difficult to identify a specific target community with whom to integrate, leading to Dörnyei (2009) describing the concept as having a lack of meaning in these contexts in regards to being a motivating learning factor. Furthermore, integrativeness did not link to the new cognitive motivational concepts that were emerging in motivational psychology, while the convergence of self theory and motivation theory occurred in the psychology field (Dörnyei, 2009). Self has long been a popular concept in psychology, with the study of *future self-guides* and *possible selves* most related to motivation. Dörnyei (2009) explained that in the last two decades "self theorists have become increasingly interested in the active, dynamic nature of the self-system" (p. 10). Dörnyei (2009) drew on both of these concepts,

Higgins' (1987) self discrepancy theory which introduced *future self guides*, and *possible selves* by Markus and Nurius (1986), to form his new theoretical framework for L2 motivation.

First proposed in 1987, Higgins' (1987) self-discrepancy theory is based on the notion that there are three types of self (actual, ideal and ought) and two desired end-states. Higgins (1987) described the three selves as representations of the beliefs of 'someone' (either yourself or someone else) of the attributes you do or should possess: the actual self is the representation of attributes someone believes that you currently possess, the ideal self represents the attributes someone would like you to possess, and the ought self represents the attributes someone thinks you should have. Higgins (1998) explained that the two desired end-states in his theory are referred to as self guides, and these two types are termed the ideal and the ought self guides. The guides act as motivation to reduce the discrepancy between the actual and ideal or ought selves, and achieve the desired end state. The concept of promotion versus prevention in regards to the ideal and ought selves is explained by Higgins (1987):

The promotion focus is concerned with accomplishments, hopes, and aspirations. It regulates the presence and absence of positive outcomes. Ideal self-guides, therefore, have a promotion focus. The prevention focus is concerned with safety, responsibilities, and obligations. It regulates the absence and presence of negative outcomes. Ought self-guides, therefore, have a prevention focus. (p. 16)

When outlining Higgins' (1987) self discrepancy theory, Dörnyei (2009) concludes that "future self-guides provide incentive, direction and impetus for action", echoing a similar statement by Markus and Nurius (1986) when describing their construct of

*possible selves*: “these ideas about what is possible for us to be, to think, to feel, or to experience provide a direction and impetus for action, change, and development” (p. 960). As argued by Markus and Nurius (1986), possible selves, a domain of self-knowledge within self-concept research, provide the essential link between self-concept and motivation. The concept of possible selves is based on the premise that individuals have three ideas of possible selves: the ideal self they strongly desire to become, the self they might become, and the self that they fear becoming (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Therefore possible selves, like Higgins’ (1987) future self guides, provide motivation to become or avoid manifestations of our possible selves. Similarly, possible selves, like in the self discrepancy theory, are separate from our current selves, however Markus and Nurius (1986) explained that they are “intimately connected...they represent specific, individually significant hopes, fears and fantasies” (p. 954) thus providing a guide to reach one’s desired state or avoid an undesired state.

Using Markus and Nurius’ (1986) theory of possible selves as one basis upon which the L2MSS is built, Dörnyei (2009) argued that possible selves also act as ‘future self-guides’, reflecting a dynamic conception which can explain how a person is moved from the present toward the future. Dörnyei (2009) highlighted the difference between future self guides and future goals, with the former involving the important aspect of self imagery, which is integral to possible selves. Also, possible selves are a long-term developmental goal which involves many stages of goal setting and achievement, with the experiential element making possible selves a larger construct than any combinations of goal theory (Dörnyei, 2009). However, since everyone is different, some individuals may not be able to easily or sufficiently

generate a possible self, therefore lacking the powerful motivation self imagery enables. Possible selves are only effective if the individual perceives them as being realistic and possible within their circumstances, and the belief that the individual has the necessary control over their behaviour to be able to achieve the ideal self (Dörnyei, 2009). This highlights the importance of vision, one of the new concepts being explored in the current socio-dynamic period of L2 motivation research. Dörnyei (2014b) explained that the use of the concept of ‘vision’ in motivation is extremely appropriate as it “represents one of the highest-order motivational forces, one that is particularly fitting to explain the long-term, and often lifelong, process of mastering a second language” (p. 11). In regards to the importance of vision, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) created a list of nine key components required for possible selves and future self guides to have a motivational impact, three of which involved vision: the learner is able to generate a future self-image; the self-image is elaborate and vivid; and there is a vivid image of the feared self offsetting the desired future self. Although vision is a contemporary research aspect of the L2MSS, this theory is also linked to previous research concepts.

The dissatisfaction of researchers regarding the applicability of Gardner’s (1972) concept of integrativeness in current contexts led to Dörnyei’s reinterpretation of integrativeness, which occurred when analysing data from his longitudinal study. His emerging theory associated integrativeness and integrative motivation with the Ideal L2 Self. Dörnyei (2009) surmised that if a person’s ideal self is proficient in an L2, they could be described as having what Gardner (1985) termed as an integrative disposition. Dörnyei (2009) further explained the connection between his new theory and Gardner’s (1972; 1985) work using the two antecedents of integrativeness,

‘attitudes towards members of the L2 community’ and ‘instrumentality’. If one’s image is of an L2 proficient ideal self, there is an attraction towards people who emulate the desired self, which in this regard would be people who were already proficient in the target language (i.e. the L2 community). Instrumentality refers to motivation to learn an L2 for external benefits such as career enhancement. Dörnyei (2009) believed that this is easily linked to the Ideal L2 Self as it is natural for one to desire their future self image to be successful in a professional context. He referred to Higgins’ (1987) work regarding promotion and prevention, as mentioned above, to further link instrumentality to the ideal and ought selves (Dörnyei, 2009). Finally, Dörnyei (2009) included the importance of the learning environment, as motivational studies throughout the 1990s recognised the motivation impacts of the classroom learning situation (Dörnyei, 1994). In 2005, Dörnyei proposed the three components that comprised of the ‘L2 Motivational Self System’:

1. *Ideal L2 Self* – the L2-specific facet of one’s ‘ideal self’ which is a powerful motivating factor due to the desire to reduce the discrepancy between the present and future self. Traditional integrative and internalised instrumental motives belong in this component.
2. *Ought-to L2 Self* – the self that one thinks they ought to be to meet expectations and avoid negative outcomes. This component refers to Higgins’ ought self and more extrinsic types of instrumental motives.
3. *L2 Learning Experience* – motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience such as the teacher, peers, curriculum and levels of success. This component is conceptualised at a different level from the two self-guides, as it is a bottom-up process from which initial motivations come

from successful engagement with the L2 learning process and thus initiate the possible self image. (Dörnyei, 2009)

Dörnyei (2009) explained that a number of quantitative studies, conducted by other researchers and specifically designed to test and validate his new theory (see Dörnyei & Ushioda's 2009 anthology), found that there was solid confirmation for the L2 Motivational Self System as demonstrated by the following points: the concepts of integrativeness and the Ideal L2 Self were found to be closely related; instrumental motivation can be split into two types (Higgins', 1987, promotion/prevention distinction); and structural equation models displayed fine goodness of fit with the data. This validation created a surge of research using Dörnyei's (2005) L2MSS, with 'Integrative/Instrumental' research experiencing a sudden decline in 2011/2012 after a steady growth from 2005/2006, and this decline coincided with a sharp increase of studies using the L2MSS as a theoretical perspective (Boo, Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). An exploration of research output over the last decade demonstrates the increasing trajectory of studies adopting the L2MSS after its validation, and suggests an increasing popularity of combining theoretical perspectives and using innovative research designs (Boo, Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015).

This new climate for second language motivational research is explored in the final part of the chapter which presents the current research agenda in the field of L2 motivation research and the significant changes that have occurred during the past decade.

#### *2.5.2.2 The current L2 research agenda*

This section is based on the historical overview and update of the previous decade of L2 research provided by Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) in the revisitation of Dörnyei's

(2005) initial book, when he introduced the concept of the L2MSS in *The psychology of the language learner* (Dörnyei, 2005). In *The psychology of the language learner revisited* (Dörnyei and Ryan, 2015), the authors describe the changes that have led to the current L2 research agenda.

A decade after Dörnyei's (2005) proposal of the L2MSS, there has been what Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) described as “the most thorough theoretical overhaul” (p. 72) in terms of the construct ‘motivation’ within second language acquisition (SLA) research. Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) argued throughout their book that L2 motivational concepts always appear to have been afflicted of the “one foot in the past and the other in the future’ phenomenon” (p. 82) which sees researchers theorising new concepts while trying to maintain links to previous L2 theories. Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) even described Dörnyei's (2005) original motivation chapter as turning “a very cautious eye over its shoulder, going to great lengths to maintain connections with existing motivation theory” (p. 73). They argued that one of the biggest changes within the decade is the status of Gardner's (1972) concept of integrativeness. It was highlighted in Section 2.5.2 that researchers were dissatisfied with this concept, yet was referred to by Dörnyei (2005) as “classic” and “untouchable” (p. 77). However, Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) reported that very few studies in Dörnyei, MacIntyre & Henry's (2015) L2 motivation anthology refer to integrativeness at all, demonstrating a shift in perspectives within a short time frame.

A proposed construct in 2005, a decade later the L2 Motivation Self System is seen to have facilitated a wave of new research, and expanded the previously narrow research field which consisted of mainly quantitative studies situated within a social psychological paradigm. Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) stated that, once a novel concept in



the L2 field of research, “in the intervening years discussions and descriptions of possible selves have become commonplace, almost obligatory, in the literature” (p. 88). In conjunction with the acceptance of possible selves and the L2MSS, the next challenge of portraying motivation as a dynamic and fluid construct was embraced and it became timely to investigate motivation in regards to the learner as a complex system instead of investigating individual variables (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). This is referred to as the complex dynamic system (CDS) theory, which has implications for future self-guides in that, as dynamic constructs, the vision of the future self is able to change, and not only does this work in a forwards manner of the learner coming closer to their future self as they close the gap, but they are able to bring the target self forwards by lessening the goal of their future vision (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015).

Furthermore, vision and imagination have become two key concepts, and the new possible direction of L2 motivational research has been identified by Dörnyei and colleagues who are exploring the concept of what they have termed ‘directed motivational currents’ (DMCs) (Dörnyei, Henry & Muir, 2016; Dörnyei, Ibrahim & Muir, 2015; Dörnyei, Muir & Ibrahim, 2014; Muir & Dörnyei, 2013). DMCs are surges of motivation which appear almost effortless and create a strong sense of excitement and anticipation which can sustain motivation and allow the individual to go above and beyond what they believed to be their own capabilities (Dörnyei, Henry & Muir, 2016). DMCs not only provide the initial motivation to begin a task but energy is created and sustained throughout the absorption period. Indeed, this is the cornerstone of this concept, with Dörnyei, Henry and Muir (2016) explaining that

A DMC is not merely a pathway toward a goal; the intriguing theoretical aspect of a DMC is that it not only provides a direction for

action, but it also energizes action. It is at this point – the current’s unique, energizing capacity – which distinguishes a DMC from almost every other motivational construct described in the literature. (p. xi)

DMCs are the extension of the concept of vision, which evolved from the concept of future self images, and Dörnyei, Henry and Muir (2016) explained that DMCs are the fusion of vision and action which come together to amplify energy, creating the sustained motivated period. Henry, Davydenko, and Dörnyei (2015) conducted the first systematic empirical investigation into DMCs to consider the validity of the construct, and they argued that the findings from this investigation indicated that “the DMC construct captures a unique form of motivation worthy of future investigation” (p. 329) as they found there to be an existence of sustained motivational surges which could be characterised by similar features used by Dörnyei and colleagues to describe DMCs.

The exploration of this new research agenda in second language learning suggests that the next decade will be as interesting as the previous one since the proposal of the L2MSS, as the field enters into a period of methodological openness and innovation, with current research markedly different from that prior to 2005 (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). A recent study by Boo, Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) investigated the research output of the last decade regarding L2 motivational research. While there is more diversity in the location of research now, with empirical research studies found to have been conducted in 53 different countries, a change from the previously dominant Canadian setting, they discovered that a clear geographical shift has occurred, with East Asia dominating the research output in terms of geographical location and learner nationality. Regarding the language of studies in the past decade,

there is again another dominance with 72.67% of empirical studies investigating the learning of English as a second language (Boo, Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). This is unsurprising given the significant levels of research being conducted in East Asia and with the global status of English as a world language. Many studies have explored monolingual speakers learning English, which led to Boo, Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) suggesting that:

This trend raises concerns as to whether the theoretical basis of L2 motivation might be affected by the L2-specific bias, and also whether the geographic shift in motivation research may lead to an unintended lack of attention to forms of language learning other than the learning of English in a [sic] primarily monolingual settings. (p. 151)

Boo, Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) also highlighted that college and university level students are the most popular participants, with a lack of research exploring motivation in secondary students. These findings highlight the significance of the present study in addressing this gap, as a study which investigates secondary and senior secondary learners of a language other than English in a monolingual setting.

This historical overview of research developments spanning the last sixty years has provided the context of the current research field, and highlighted the interest in the L2 Motivational Self System as a validated theory relevant to the modern concepts of self, imagination and visualisation.

## **2.6 Chapter summary**

Motivation is a complex concept to investigate, and the field of L2 motivational research has made significant advancements in the past decade with the development

of the L2MSS, CDS theory and DMCs, leading to an exciting next decade of research into second language learning motivation. This chapter has provided an outline of the importance of languages education and its position within global, national and local contexts. Despite this demonstrated importance, enrolment statistics suggest a lack of interest from students as numbers decline in the post-compulsory years. The challenges facing languages education have been summarised, as have the factors affecting students' motivation to enrol in an elective L2 subject at school. Furthermore, barriers to learning have been outlined which also affect motivation to study. An overview of the historical developments of the SLA field assisted the development of understanding the positioning of the L2MSS, which is the theory applied to the Tasmanian context in which the present study was situated, and a brief discussion of the contemporary L2 motivational constructs indicated the future directions of the field. The next chapter details how Dörnyei's (2005) L2MSS was applied as a methodological framework to this investigation of Tasmanian students' motivations for L2 learning, and guided the project's research design and analysis.

# Chapter 3

## Methodology

This chapter presents the research methods which were used in the study, and justifies the research design choices. The present study sought to understand Tasmanian students' motivations for choosing or not choosing a second language elective subject at school. It was a mixed method design which allowed a deeper understanding of the quantitative data through the subsequent collection and analysis of qualitative data, and this allowed the researcher to develop a rich, detailed understanding of the motivational factors affecting Tasmanian students' L2 enrolment. In an endeavour to understand students' motivations, the present study used an explanatory mixed method design, where quantitative data is further explained by qualitative data to provide a deeper understanding of the problem (Creswell, 2014). A state-wide survey was first employed to gather data concerning students' perceptions of second language learning and their reasons for choosing or not choosing an L2 elective subject. Focus group interviews were then conducted to further understand the data from the survey. This chapter begins by presenting the research questions guiding the study, followed by a discussion of the methodological approach. Next, the ethical considerations and research participants are presented. This is followed by the methods section, where the quantitative and qualitative phases are each detailed in

terms of participants, data collection and analysis, and concludes with the chapter summary.

### **3.1 Research questions**

In order to understand the problem investigated, the following research question were posed:

RQ 1 What factors influence students' enrolment decisions when considering elective second language subjects?

RQ 2 Are there any barriers which prevent students from enrolling in an elective second language subject?

RQ 3 How does the L2 Motivational Self System apply in the Tasmanian context?

RQ 4 Can the L2 Motivational Self System be applied to students who are not studying a second language?

To answer these questions, the following methodological approach and research methods were adopted.

### **3.2 Methodological approach**

The detailing of the chosen methodological approach begins by an outline of the characteristics of quantitative and qualitative research, followed by the justification of the methodology of mixed methods. Outlining the characteristics of each research approach provides an understanding of the important role of both methods within the present research project, and the way they complement and enhance the data of the other. While quantitative and qualitative approaches are commonly regarded as a

dichotomy, Creswell (2014) and Dörnyei (2007) suggest that they are instead two ends of a continuum, with Creswell (2014) placing mixed methods in the centre as it is a combination of approaches. Each of these methods is further described in an outline of their characteristics.

### **3.2.1 Characteristics of Quantitative Research**

Quantitative research began in the social sciences after social researchers were impressed by the progress of the natural sciences and adopted the scientific method of research, which involves firstly identifying a problem or phenomenon, before creating a hypothesis in relation to the problem, and then testing the hypothesis by collecting and analysing empirical (primary) data (Dörnyei, 2007). It was integral that the data collection and analysis was performed using standardized procedures, which, in line with the three steps of scientific method, allowed for an objective manner in which to explore problems and phenomena (Dörnyei, 2007). Quantitative methods are based on the use of numbers and statistics, and O' Leary (2010) describes the quantitative tradition of research as having "a strong belief in the scientific method, the need to test hypotheses, deductive logic, the need for objectivity, and, as the name suggests, the value of quantification" (p. 106) and thus quantitative research is centred on the concepts of variables and variance (Punch, 2014). Expanding on the importance of variables in quantitative research, Creswell (2014) states that objective theories are tested by examining the relationships between variables. This style of research is based on the idea that "the study of society is no different to the scientific study of any other element of our world – from particles to animals" (O'Leary, 2010, p. 206). This is demonstrated by the historical methodological account of quantitative research

given by Punch (2014), who explains that empirical social science research initially imitated the scientific research methods of the natural sciences, before broadening the scope of experiments due to the limitations of its applicability in terms of practicality and ethicality. This led to first quasi-experimental and then non-experimental designs in naturally occurring situations, as researchers were not able to study many important questions by experimental design. Essentially, quantitative research “conceptualises reality in terms of variables; it measures these variables; and it studies the relationships between these variables” (Punch, 2014, p. 206). The relationships between variables is an essential part of quantitative research, and the quantitative data of the present study consisted of numerous variables which were analysed to develop an understanding of the phenomena being investigated. Using quantitative methods in the social sciences allows for objectivity, as the researcher removes themselves from the societies they are part of and the object of study, which allows for the traditional indicators of credibility. Furthermore, large populations are able to be studied, with the use of probability and statistics providing validity (O’Leary, 2010). Large scale survey-based research is a popular quantitative method within the social sciences, and this was the tool for quantitative data collection used in the present study, as it allowed for the entire population of Year 9 to 12 Tasmanian students to be invited to participate, thus gathering as many responses as possible to provide a big picture of students’ attitudes towards second language learning. The main strengths of quantitative research are summarised by Dörnyei (2007) when he explains “at its best the quantitative inquiry is systematic, rigorous, focused, and tightly controlled, involving precise measurement and producing reliable and replicable data that is generalizable to other contexts” (p. 35). In comparison to these



strengths, Dörnyei (2007) then outlines the weaknesses of quantitative methods, highlighting that often they miss the meanings that are attached by participants to their lives, as instead individual responses become averages, therefore “quantitative methods are generally not very sensitive in uncovering the reasons for particular observations or the dynamics underlying the examined situation or phenomenon” (p. 35). While this is a weakness of quantitative methods, this is instead where qualitative research excels.

### **3.2.2 Characteristics of Qualitative Research**

Dörnyei (2007) explains that qualitative methods began in the social sciences around the first decade of the twentieth century, however were not named as such due to the terms qualitative and quantitative not yet created. After the hegemony of quantitative studies in the middle of the twentieth century, it was not until the seventies that qualitative research became more prominent (Dörnyei, 2007; Punch, 2014). The goal of qualitative research, as explained by O’Leary (2010), is “to gain an intimate understanding of people, places, cultures and situations through rich engagement and even immersion into the reality being studied” (p. 114). Through qualitative research, the researcher attempts to understand the phenomena as it occurs to the participants. This is highlighted by Punch (2014), who defines a major characteristic of qualitative research as “naturalistic, preferring to study people, things and events in their natural settings” (p. 118). His point of natural settings is important, as this allows the researcher to observe how the phenomena present themselves to the participant and how the participant reacts, in terms of their attitudes, behaviours, decisions and choices. This naturalistic quality of qualitative research is beneficial in education

settings, where researchers can visit schools and other education settings to collect their data. O’Leary (2010) argues that the qualitative tradition:

Calls on inductive as well as deductive logic, appreciates subjectivities, accepts multiple perspectives and realities...it also strongly argues the value of depth over quantity and works at delving into social complexities in order to truly explore and understand the interactions, processes, lived experiences and belief systems that are part of individuals, institutions, cultural groups, and even the everyday. (p. 114)

Qualitative research aims to elicit an understanding of phenomena via lived experiences, and to gather a rich and detailed view of what those experiences truly mean. Kervin, Vialle, Herrington and Okely (2006) explain that the qualitative researcher is interested in exploring the “subjective experience, ideas and feelings of participants” (p. 37). This is further elaborated upon by Creswell (2014), who states that qualitative researchers support research “that honors an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning, and the importance of rendering the complexity of a situation” (p. 4). This deeper understanding of the phenomena is at the heart of qualitative research, and the present study used interviews to elicit participants’ direct experiences and attitudes towards second language learning. Exploring and understanding meaning, flexibility, and the ability to answer ‘why’ questions are all strengths of the qualitative research approach, however there are also weaknesses, such as: smaller sample sizes which leads to an issue of generalisability; the researcher’s biases and idiosyncrasies which can affect data analysis; the creation of

theories which are too complex or narrow; and the time-consuming nature of qualitative research processes (Dörnyei, 2007).

Each approach has been shown to have weaknesses, and the adoption of the mixed methods approach aims to combine both qualitative and quantitative strengths while eliminating the weaknesses, although in itself a mixed methods approach has both strengths and weaknesses.

### **3.2.3 The Mixed Method Approach to Research**

The mixed methods approach is first outlined by discussing the characteristics of the approach, including the strengths and weaknesses, followed by the explanation and justification of the mixed methods design adopted in the present study.

#### ***3.2.3.1 Characteristics of mixed methods research***

When providing a preliminary working definition of quantitative and qualitative research approaches, Dörnyei (2007) describes quantitative research as collecting numerical data which is then analysed using mainly statistical methods, and qualitative research involves collecting non-numerical data, which is mainly open ended, and using non-statistical methods of analysis. While these approaches initially appear to be distinct, with their data collection and analyses either consisting of words or numbers, Dörnyei (2007) argues that they are in fact on a continuum, as “sometimes we convert our raw experiences of the social world into words...at other times numbers” (p. 25), citing Miles and Huberman (1994, as cited in Dörnyei, 2007) who argued that all data can be qualitative to some extent because they refer to the essence of the social world being examined. However, delving deeper into each approach, there are contrasts between the two approaches which provide sources of

division, which can be demonstrated from the previous characterisation of quantitative and qualitative methods. Thus the paradigm wars began, and Dörnyei (2007) provides a succinct distinction between the two approaches:

Quantitative research was seen to offer a structured and highly regulated way of achieving a macro-perspective of the overarching trends of the world, whereas qualitative research was perceived to represent a flexible and highly context-sensitive micro-perspective of the everyday realities of the world. (p. 29)

Punch (2014) explains that in the social sciences, paradigm wars of ‘either/or’ began in the seventies with the increased acceptance of qualitative methods after the historical dominance of quantitative methods. Two decades later, researchers’ strongly held views of the ‘either/or’ argument waned, as they began to see past the paradigm wars and develop the groundwork for designs which adopted a mixed methods approach (Punch, 2014), and Dörnyei (2007) explains that there is now “a peaceful coexistence of quantitative and qualitative methods” (p. 31) in many areas of the social sciences. In educational research, Suter (2012) believes that despite mixed methods designs being the most complex, they “may also be the most useful because they honor true complexity of learning in our schools” (p. 370), thus demonstrating the value of mixed methods research in gaining the best possible understanding of the problem investigated. This point highlights part of the justification for the present study adopting a mixed methods approach, as the research question involves investigating the phenomena of language learning at school, therefore it was essential to conduct research which allowed the best possible development of understanding of this complexity.

When discussing the introduction of mixed methods research, Dörnyei (2007) suggests that this was the next natural step from the ‘situationalist’ approach, which believed that both approaches had value and the choice ought to depend upon the research topic. This still represented an ‘either/or’ viewpoint, and Dörnyei (2007) argues that “while it is true that particular research topics or questions can be more naturally linked to either QUAL or QUAN methods, in most cases we can also look at the same research question from another angle, using the other approach, thus uncovering new aspects of the issue” (p. 30). This is the underlying principle of the mixed methods approach, where the two methodologies are combined to allow the enhancement and corroboration of the data to further understand the research question or topic. Dörnyei (2007) explains that it was not until the seventies, when the concept of ‘triangulation’ was introduced to the social sciences that “the real breakthrough in combining quantitative and qualitative research occurred” (p. 43). According to Dörnyei (2007), “methodological triangulation can help to reduce the inherent weaknesses of individual methods by offsetting them by the strengths of another” (p. 43), and this is echoed in the initial description of mixed methods provided by Creswell and Plano Clark (2007, as cited in Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) in their first edition of *Designing and Conducting Research Methods*, where they state that “its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches, in combination, provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone” (p. 5). In the second edition, Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) have extended this definition by creating a definition of core characteristics of mixed methods research which combines methods, a philosophy, and a research design orientation. This demonstrates the complexity of the multifaceted approach that is

mixed methods. This leads to the notion suggested by Dörnyei (2007) whether researchers adopting mixed methods can be skilful enough to adequately use both research approaches and handle the mixed data accordingly. This is especially true for beginning researchers, thus in addressing this issue in the present study, it was important to seek the advice of experts in both fields of research to ensure that the appropriate methods were applied. Despite this notion, mixed methods was chosen due to the advantages of the approach, which include the weaknesses being accounted for by the other method, the layers of data collection and analysis which provide a deeper understanding, and the improved validity from the convergence of the findings (Dörnyei, 2007).

There are a number of designs that can be applied in a mixed methods study which varies the relationship of the quantitative and qualitative parts in terms of priority and implementation. Plano Clarke and Creswell (2008) list six major designs: sequential explanatory, sequential exploratory, sequential transformative, concurrent triangulation, concurrent nested, and concurrent transformative. The three sequential designs have sequenced, two phase data collection methods, whereas the concurrent designs collect data simultaneously using both methods in one phase. For most of these designs, the priority can be equal, however some usually have a focus on one method, such as the priority in sequential explanatory designs being quantitative (Plano Clarke & Creswell, 2008). Sequential explanatory design begins with the quantitative method followed by the qualitative method, whereas the exploratory design is reversed. The sequential transformative design can start with either method first, with priority given to either method, and this design definitely has a theoretical perspective which guides the study, whereas the previous two may or may not have a

theoretical perspective present (Plano Clarke & Creswell, 2008). Concurrent triangulation sees both methods implemented during the data collection phase, data is analysed simultaneously, and then the results are compared. The concurrent nested design acts in a similar way, however one of the methods is nested or embedded within the other predominant method, which can allow the embedded method to investigate a different question or the same question at a different level. Like the sequential transformative design, the concurrent transformative design definitely uses a theoretical perspective to guide the study, and can thus adopt the design features of a triangulation or nested design (Plano Clarke & Creswell, 2008). This brief outline of the six major designs demonstrates the different relationships that a mixed method study can adopt, and the variations of sequence and priority that researchers can employ in their study.

Plano Clarke and Creswell (2008) argue that when explaining the design of a mixed methods study, it is important to frame the design in terms of the philosophical assumptions underpinning it. The present study uses an explanatory sequential mixed methods design, which is explained in section 3.2.3.3, after the philosophical assumptions underpinning this design are discussed.

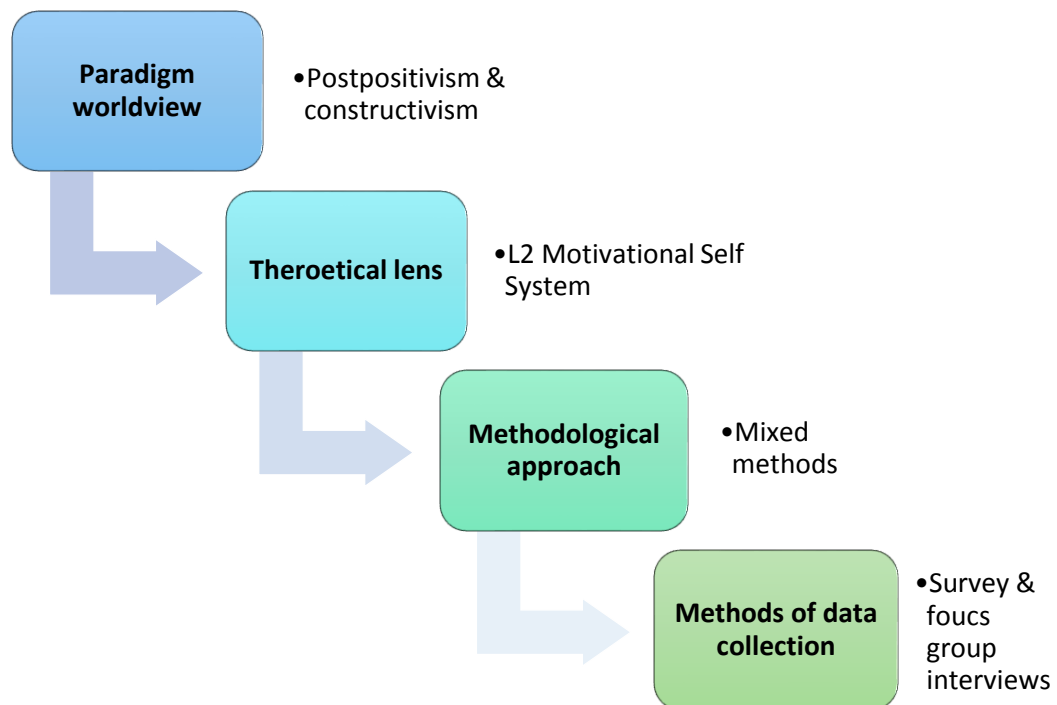
### *3.2.3.2 The mixed methods worldview*

Philosophical assumptions are termed by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) as a worldview, and refer to the beliefs and assumptions about knowledge held by researchers which thus inform their inquiry. Pragmatism is a pluralistic worldview that Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) state is often associated with mixed methods research, however they argue that for a mixed methods study it is more appropriate to use multiple worldviews which are selected based on the type of mixed method

design. To this end, for explanatory sequential design, they suggest that a combination of postpositivist and constructivist paradigms are used as the design shifts from quantitative to qualitative (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). This adoption of multiple worldviews is embraced within the field of educational research, as demonstrated by Hartas (2009), who argues that in this field research problems are often very complex and require an understanding of the range of factors which interact to create the conditions seen in schools and communities, and “this awareness has stimulated the integration of different worldviews to support mixed-research methodologies for educators to engage with inquiry” (p. 50). Hartas (2009) further suggests that “within the context of mixed-method research, integrated worldviews may offer the intellectual platform for educational research as a cooperative action to emerge, and address the ways in which knowledge in education translates into policy and practice at a local level” (p. 50). In an explanatory sequential design, the first phase of quantitative research is followed by the second phase of qualitative research. Creswell (2014) outlines that postpositivist assumptions are often at the core of scientific inquiry, and postpositivism recognises that claims of knowledge are not infallible when it comes to the behaviour and actions of people. Constructivism is centred on meanings, and the understandings of phenomena as experienced by participants, and this is often associated with qualitative research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Constructivists believe that meaning is created through social interaction, both with other people and the immediate environment. According to Hartas (2009), “educational research that draws upon constructivism strives to empower participants’ perspectives and ideas, and obtain rich descriptions of the contexts that surround their lives” (p. 44), thus relying on interpretation of multiple perspectives created through



interaction. Creswell (2014) summarises that the main ideas of constructivism are: understanding; multiple participant meanings; social and historical construction; and theory generation. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) used an adaption of Crotty's (1998, as cited in Plano and Clark, 2011) conceptualisation of the four levels of research design to demonstrate how worldviews are positioned within mixed method design. This conceptualisation has been adapted to represent the design of this study (see Figure 3.1). The type of mixed method design adopted for this study is discussed and justified in the next section of this chapter.



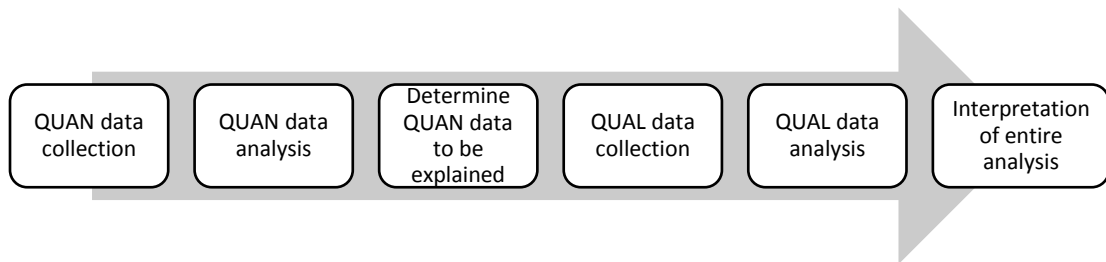
*Figure 3.1:* Four Levels for developing a research design

### 3.2.3.3 *The mixed methods design*

A mixed methods design was selected for the present research study based on Bryman's (2006, as cited in Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) notion of 'completeness', and this refers to the belief that the researcher can gain a more comprehensive account

and understanding of the topic being investigated. ‘Illustration’ is another reason, where qualitative data illustrate the findings from the quantitative phase which enhances the overall story being presented (Bryman, 2006, as cited in Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The explanatory sequential mixed method design was chosen for the present study, and as explained by Creswell (2014), this type of design is a two-phase project where the findings of the quantitative approach are used to inform the qualitative research. Plano Clark and Creswell (2008) explain that while priority is often given to the quantitative method, priority can also be to the qualitative method, or equal priority can be given. In the design for the present study, it was decided that equal priority would be given to the quantitative and qualitative methods. This decision was based on the belief that while the quantitative method informed the qualitative design, and provided generalisable data which enabled ‘the big picture’ to develop, understanding the meaning of participants’ experiences was considered equally important in developing a rich understanding of the phenomena being investigated. This design is described using Morse’s (1991, as cited in Plano Clark & Creswell, 2008) notation system: QUAN → QUAL, where equal priority is indicated by the capitalisation (as opposed to the use of capitalisation for the priority method and lower case for the other method) and the arrow to signal the sequential nature of the design. Creswell (2014) explains that this design consists of two distinct data collection and analyses phases. First the quantitative data are collected and analysed, and this informs the design of the qualitative method. The qualitative data are then collected and analysed, before an interpretation of the entire analysis. It is here that Creswell (2014) highlights the importance of reporting the results of each phase separately before a third form of interpretation is presented, which describes how the

qualitative findings further explain the initial quantitative data that was collected. This discussion essentially demonstrates “what overall is learned in response to the study’s purpose” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 83). The steps of this explanatory sequential design are presented in Figure 3.2 and have been recreated from the design figures of Plano Clark & Creswell (2008) and Creswell (2015).



*Figure 3.2: Explanatory sequential design*

Creswell and Plano Clarke (2011) highlight the advantages of explanatory design, which include: the implementation of data collection is straightforward, as there are distinct phases as opposed to simultaneous collection; the two-phase approach allows for a clear delineation when reporting the study; and the design allows for emergent approaches as the second phase is based on data from the first. With any research method comes disadvantages, and Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) also highlight the challenges involved with explanatory design, including: the two-phase design is time-consuming, especially the qualitative phase; it can be difficult to gain approval for this design because “the researcher cannot specify how participants will be selected for the second phase until the initial findings are obtained” (p. 85); and it needs to be decided which quantitative data to use to inform the second phase.

In considering these possible disadvantages, it was important to plan and adhere to a collection and analysis schedule, and ensure that the quantitative data

informed the qualitative data collection in a way that best addressed the problem being investigated. In addition, there were ethical considerations for which to account, which is now detailed before an overview of the study's participants is presented.

### **3.3 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical consideration for this research project was underpinned by the principles of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2007). In a mixed method approach, there are ethical considerations for both the quantitative and qualitative research, which include obtaining permissions, participant anonymity, communicating the purpose of the study, awareness of potential power issues during data collection, respecting vulnerable populations and not disclosing sensitive information (Creswell, 2015). In response to these ethical considerations, participants were assigned pseudonyms to protect their identities and these were used at any time the data was being reported. Addressing this ethical consideration was particularly important due to the study's explanatory design, as Creswell (2015) explains that qualitative data is based on responses from the quantitative phase, thus individuals need to be identified so that the data can be linked. In this study, participants who chose to be in the focus group interviews needed to provide contact details which made their survey responses identifiable to the researcher. Therefore the use of pseudonyms at all times was crucial to maintaining participants' anonymity. Participants were treated with respect at all times, and participation was entirely voluntary. Participants had the right to refuse to answer any interview questions, and could withdraw from the study at any time. All data is stored in a locked filing cabinet or on a password protected computer

hard-drive within the Faculty of Education, Cradle Coast Campus. Hardcopies of all data will be destroyed by shredding after five years of the project's completion and all electronic data will be securely deleted.

### **3.3.1 Human Research Ethics Committee**

The present research project involved collecting data from students, many of whom were under 18 year of age, thus the submission of a full ethics application was required for the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). Prior to this submission, the application was submitted to the Faculty of Education for an ethical review and once the application was amended to reflect review revisions it was submitted to HREC. Approval was given for a period of four years (see Appendix A), conditional upon the provision of an annual progress report to HREC (reference number H0014676).

### **3.3.2 Department of Education**

The Tasmanian Department of Education (DoE) requires a research permission form to be submitted prior to any research project being conducted in their schools. To assist this application process, meetings were held with representatives of the DoE to discuss the application before submission. Despite HREC's agreement that students were deemed mature enough to provide their own consent to participate in the survey (not the focus groups), DoE policy required any student under the age of 18 to obtain parental/guardian consent. In light of this policy, an additional survey for DoE students was created, which verified that they had obtained consent if they were a minor. By indicating in the affirmative, participants were automatically redirected to the survey instrument page to begin the questionnaire. With this requirement satisfied,

approval was given to conduct research in DoE settings shortly after submitting the application form (see Appendix B).

### **3.3.3 Catholic Education**

The Catholic Education Office also requires approval to be obtained by them prior to any research being conducted within the Catholic Education system. A letter was sent to the Director of Catholic Education outlining the project and seeking approval, which was granted (see Appendix C).

### **3.3.4 Independent Education**

The Independent schools do not require any approvals for research to be conducted in their schools after the HREC approval. As a courtesy, the Independent Schools Tasmania Director was informed that schools would be invited to participate in the study.

## **3.4 Methods**

The present study consisted of two data collection phases, one quantitative and one qualitative. A mixed methods approach was chosen to provide data that was generalisable as well as deep, with the combination providing the best of both worlds (O’Leary, 2010). The two data phases are described, firstly the quantitative phase which consisted of a survey and secondly the qualitative phase which details the focus group interviews.

### 3.4.1 Phase 1 - Quantitative

#### 3.4.1.1 Participants

The present study aimed to invite the entire population of Tasmanian students in Years 9 to 12 to participate in the first phase of the study. This population had been chosen as the participants for this study because after Year 8 students have the option to choose an L2 as an elective subject. In Tasmanian schools, many Year 7, and in some cases Year 8, students are required to learn an L2 as a compulsory school subject. Thus students who are above Year 8 have the opportunity to enrol in an elective L2 and the present study aimed to elicit their motivations for the enrolment choice they made. There were 94 Tasmanian schools which were eligible to participate in the study, from which 17 schools agreed to participate (see appendix D for the email invitation sent to principals and the study information sheet for principals). For the first phase of data collection, the survey, there were 528 responses, 325 of which were fully completed.

#### 3.4.1.2 Data collection

The first phase of data collection involved the quantitative aspect of the study, with a state-wide survey employed to collect data pertaining to factors that affect students' motivation when considering whether or not to enrol in an elective second language. This phase was based on the motivation that exists in what Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) describe as the 'preactional phase' of their motivation construct, the Process Model of L2 Motivation. This phase involves the three sub-phases *goal setting*, *intention formation* and *initiation of intention enactment*. Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) explain that during the preactional phase hopes/wishes, desires, and opportunities all influence the setting of a goal, to which commitment needs to be added to reach the next step of

making an action plan to thus achieve the goal. The motivation to initiate an action differs to the motivation needed to sustain that action to achieve the set goal. This motivation type encompasses the initial reasons on which students base their decisions for choosing whether or not to study a LOTE as an elective subject at school.

The survey instrument was a questionnaire based on previous studies (Busse & Williams, 2010; Dörnyei, 2010; Zammit, 1992) and included information concerning students' motivations when considering choosing an elective second language, their beliefs and values pertaining to L2 learning, and general demographic and personal information such as age, school and postcode. The design of the questionnaire is discussed in further detail below. All Tasmanian students in Years 9 to 12 were invited to participate in the survey, subject to their school's participation in the study. The questionnaire was an online format and was completed during students' personal time, unless teachers specifically allowed time for its completion in class. It was expected to take students no longer than 20 minutes to complete, and consisted mostly of Likert scale items. To encourage participation in the survey, students who completed the questionnaire were eligible to win one of five iTunes vouchers to the value of 20 dollars. This competition used a different website from the survey so that entries were not linked to participants' responses to retain anonymity. The survey was open for eleven weeks to allow a maximum response rate in consideration of the time frame of recruiting schools to the study.

#### *Instrument Design*

The questionnaire was designed mainly on the instrument devised for Zammit's (1992) nation-wide ACER study, with some inclusions from Dörnyei (2010) and



Busse and Williams' (2010) questionnaires. Many questions from Dörnyei's (2010) were repeated in Busse and Williams' (2010) questionnaire, and were thus used in the design of the questionnaire for the present study as Dörnyei (2010) recommends using items from other questionnaires, as these will already have been tested and as such should be relatively sound. After giving this advice, he includes an apt quote regarding the acknowledgement of sources, as although "plagiarism is regarded as a vice in most matters, it is a virtue in questionnaire writing – assuming, of course, that you plagiarize good quality questions" (Sudman & Bradburn, 1983, as cited in Dörnyei, 2010, p. 40). The selection of a previous instrument was chosen for the above reasons, as well as allowing a comparison of data between the previous and present studies, a difference of more than 20 years.

To allow this comparison, the design of the survey was deliberately kept very similar to Zammit's (1992) instrument, using the same sections and a very similar item order. Whereas Zammit's (1992) instrument used a Likert scale consisting of four response options (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree) the instrument was redesigned with six responses in accordance with Dörnyei's (2010) preference of omitting the 'undecided' or 'neutral' category of the original five step Likert scale and instead including 'partly disagree' and 'partly agree' between 'agree' and 'disagree' to create a six step scale. This decision was made to avoid the possibility of respondents using the middle category as an 'easy answer' which required less cognitive effort, and aligned with the commonality of researchers using a five or six step scale (Dörnyei, 2010). The majority of the items in Zammit's (1992) instrument were used, with very few items being omitted and only minor changes to some items to better suit the present study's objectives.

As the present study was based on Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivation Self System construct, it was imperative to include items regarding the Ideal and Ought-to L2 selves. Items from Zammit's (1992) instrument were applicable to the L2 Learning Experiences so no more items were added to keep the survey length manageable. Dörnyei (2007) recommends that a survey should take no longer than 30 minutes to complete, and this was adhered to when creating the instrument. The Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self items were included in Section 2 and were replicated from the previous studies by Dörnyei (2010) and Busse and Williams (2010). It was difficult to maintain the balance between depth and breadth, and include enough items for validity while also attempting to cover as much information as possible without creating a survey that was too long for participants to complete. Therefore five items from each scale were included in Section 2. For the Ideal L2 Self the items included were:

The things I want to do in the future involve learning a LOTE.

I can imagine myself as someone who is able to speak a LOTE.

I want to be the kind of person that speaks a LOTE well.

I see myself one day speaking a LOTE with native speakers around the world.

If I achieve my dreams, I will use a LOTE effectively in the future.

The items included for the Ought-to L2 Self were:

Learning a LOTE is necessary because people surrounding me expect me to.

If I fail to study a LOTE I will be letting other people down.

I believe that learning a LOTE is important because the people that I respect think that I should.

Studying a LOTE is important to me because an educated person is supposed to be able to speak a second language.

I feel that I should keep studying a LOTE because I have already spent years learning it.

A mixture of positively and negatively worded items was used to avoid respondents only being required to make one side of the rating scale, as is suggested by Dörnyei (2010), which also reduced the ‘acquiescence bias’ where respondents dislike providing strong negative responses or even considering the negative aspects, as well as respondents who simply agree with the sentence due to being unsure or ambivalent.

Due to the large amount of students being invited to participate in the survey, an online format was the preferred mode of administration. This was important as students were required to complete the survey in their own time, thus the online format made the survey accessible at any time and place where a student had access to an internet connection and a computer or mobile/tablet device. This also created a more effective survey experience as students only needed to answer questions relevant to their situation. The survey skipped questions and sections based on students’ prior answers, reducing the overall time taken to complete the survey. The option to save and return to the survey was enabled so that students were able to complete the questionnaire in a number of sittings if required. This online mode of administration reduced the effort that school principals and teachers needed to expend for their students’ participation. This mode was also more efficient regarding data processing with fewer errors from manual input (Bryman, 2008). Further benefits of an online survey suggested by Dörnyei (2010) include being time and cost effective, which is a major consideration in a doctorate study. The large volume of participants

would have incurred high costs for a paper format, and taken much more time to send and receive paper copies of the survey, with additional effort placed on school staff to organise the distribution and collection of surveys. This extra time spent to manually input the data was not viable to the present study.

The software program Qualtrics was used to create the online survey (see Appendix E). Careful consideration was given to the layout of the survey regarding the number of questions on each page and the format of the questions to make the experience of completing the survey as simple as possible for participants, as advised by Dörnyei (2010). Due to the large number of participants, anonymous distribution was used to provide students with a link to the survey. Unfortunately, this method had the pitfall of allowing students to take the survey multiple times or be accessed by people outside the study's sample, however certain measures were taken in an attempt to prevent these scenarios. There were two options in Qualtrics that allowed these preventative measures: 'prevent ballot box stuffing' and 'unsearchable link'. The first measure prevented students from taking the survey more than once by placing a cookie on their browser. This meant that when they attempted to complete the survey again the page recognised the cookie and identified them as having already done the survey. However, this can be circumvented by participants clearing the cookies on the computer/device or using a different web browser. Making the link unsearchable meant that it would not be identified using a web browser search, however this did not prevent participants from providing the link to others outside of the study's participant scope. These were the two limitations to using anonymous distribution for the online survey, however it was hoped that these preventative measures went some way to reducing the possibility of receiving false data.

*Testing the instrument*

Once the survey had been created using Qualtrics it was important to test the online format and question clarity. For this test, the teenage children of a colleague agreed to assist during the time they were home in their school holidays. These children were in Year 8 and 10 at school in Victoria, thus they were not eligible participants in the study's sample. The children were asked to complete the online survey and provide feedback on the layout and question clarity, along with any other observations that they made. The researcher observed the two children as they completed the survey to ensure that the survey flow was correct and to assist with any question clarity issues, with some minor adjustments to the instrument resulting from the test. The researcher was concerned about survey fatigue, however both children completed the survey in around ten minutes each and commented that it was neither too long nor tedious.

*Survey Competition*

A competition was created for students to enter once they had completed the survey. The chance to win one of five iTunes vouchers to the value of 20 dollars each was offered as an incentive to encourage students to participate in the survey. Participants who chose to be considered for the focus groups received a bonus entry. The competition webpage ([www.rafflecopter.com](http://www.rafflecopter.com)) was accessed via a link at the end of the survey so that participants' responses were not linked in any way to their entry in the competition, thus maintaining anonymity for those who had not provided their details for the focus groups. Competition terms and conditions were written to outline the rules of entering the competition and protect the researchers from any disputes arising from the competition.

*Survey deployment*

All Consenting schools were sent a detailed email (see Appendix F – includes teacher information sheet) describing the process of the survey deployment. To maximise participation rates, schools were asked to email the invitation (Appendix G), which included the information sheet and survey link, to all eligible students in the school, provide the survey link on the student intranet, and encourage all form teachers to inform students of the study. Due to the time taken to complete the recruitment and deployment process, and to allow for ample opportunity for students to complete the survey, the survey was open for eleven weeks, with the closure to coincide with the end of the third school term. A reminder email was sent to all the contact teachers in the participating schools two weeks prior to the closure of the survey, asking them to remind students of the closing date. This appeared to be a successful strategy, as the majority of responses were collected in the final two weeks of the survey data collection period. As the number of students invited to participate in the study was unknown, it is impossible to generate a response rate. However, there was a 70% completion rate of the survey, with a total of 528 responses, 372 of which were fully completed and submitted.

*3.4.1.3 Analysis*

As this was a mixed methods study, there were also two phases of data analysis, which required different analytical processes and tools for each data type. The quantitative analysis was performed first, as this data informed the interview schedule for the focus groups, and this was a linear process compared to the cyclical nature of qualitative analysis. Quantitative data were analysed using the software Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 22). Variables and their relationships

are the cornerstones of quantitative research, and as Hoy (2010) explains, “measurement and statistics are central to quantitative research because they are the connections between empirical observation and mathematical expressions of relations” (p. 1). Analyses included descriptive statistics, including mean and reliability, along with inferential statistics to test for significance, such as hierarchical linear regressions. First, Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were performed to determine the reliability of subscales, followed by the mean, standard deviations and correlations of each subscale. Hierarchical linear regressions were then used to examine how multiple independent variables contribute to the prediction of another variable (Salkind, 2014). Analysis informed the second phase of the explanatory sequential design.

### **3.4.2 Phase 2 - Qualitative**

#### **3.4.2.1 *Participants***

For the second phase of data collection, seven schools were chosen as the research sites based on the number of students who had self-selected and school demographics (type, location, social economic status). A single focus group was held in each school involving students of mixed Year level, gender and L2 enrolment status. There was one site where participation numbers were large enough to conduct two focus group interviews and students at this site were organised into the two groups based on their L2 enrolment status. A total of 37 students were interviewed across the seven research sites.

#### **3.4.2.2 *Student Profiles***

Participants in the focus groups were profiled based on their survey and focus group data. These participants were classified under the following five categories:

Continuing Students, Forced Discontinuing Students, Undecided Students, New Discontinuing Students, and Discontinuing Students. These categories were partially informed by the attrition and retention study by Martin and Jansen (2012) who created a classification table (Table 3.1) based on student commitment and enrolment circumstances:

*Table 3.1: Classification of students' commitment to language study (recreated from Martin & Jansen, 2012)*

Commitment to language studies	Continuing Students	Discontinuing Students
High	Did not consider discontinuing	Wanted to continue, but had no choice but to discontinued
Low	Seriously thought of discontinuing but continued (or had to continue)	Thought of discontinuing and discontinued

From their study, they identified three categories of students: Committed, Doubters, and Quitters. Martin and Jansen's (2012) aim was to go beyond the dichotomy of continuing/discontinuing students, however the lack of numbers for the 'highly motivated but discontinuing students' category necessitated that the two discontinuing categories be collapsed to become what was labelled the 'Quitters' category. Committed students were classified as continuing students with high commitment, while the Doubters were continuing students with low commitment.

In the initial stages of the present study's design, it was hypothesised that there were five possible categories of students. The initial categories were, in terms of elective second language learning, students who:

- Want to and do
- Do not want to but do
- Want to but do not



- Do not want to anymore, so do not
- Do not want to, never did, and so do not

After reading Martin and Jansen's (2012) study, it was planned to adopt their classifications and redefine initial categories. However, the thematic analysis of data from the focus group interviews revealed the need for the creation of two more categories to further classify students in the Quitters category: *Forced Quitters* and *New Quitters*. A new classification table (see Table 3.2) was conceptualised based on that of Martin and Jansen's (2012), which consisted of six categories and new terminology to more easily describe students' classification:

*Table 3.2: Classification of students' commitment to languages study*

Commitment to language studies	Continuing Students	Discontinuing Students
High	Continuing Students	Forced Discontinuing Students
Medium	Undecided Students	New Discontinuing Students
Low	Forced Continuing Students	Discontinuing Students

There were no students in the present study who were classified as Forced Continuing Students, which refers to students who were enrolled in an elective L2 subject but did not want to be studying a language. Participants were classified into the remaining five categories based on their elective second language enrolment status and their L2 learning desires. The five classifications are described as follows:

#### *Continuing*

Continuing Students are highly motivated students who have chosen to continue their second language studies, and are planning to continue next year. Students were placed in this category based on the fact that they were enrolled in an elective class and had not suggested that they may discontinue (however not all students indicated their

possible enrolment status for the next year). These are the students who want to study a second language elective subject at school and are able to do so, therefore they are enrolled in an L2 subject. There were 12 participants from the focus group interviews who were identified as Continuing Students.

#### *Forced Discontinuing Students*

Students who are categorised as Forced Discontinuing Students are highly motivated but are not currently enrolled in an elective second language at school. These are the students who want to be studying an elective L2 but don't for a range of reasons.

Students have been classified by their non-L2 enrolment status and their comments indicating a desire to study an L2. There were 10 students who were identified as being Forced Discontinuing Students.

#### *Undecided Students*

This classification contains students who are currently enrolled in an elective L2 but who have a medium level of motivation for second language study, as they are considering discontinuing in the subject next year, hence the name stemming from the term 'doubting'. There were six students were classified as Undecided Students.

Essentially these students want to learn an L2 and so they are enrolled in the subject; however, due to their continuation doubts, they are classified as having medium motivation which distinguishes them from the Continuing category.

#### *New Discontinuing Students*

New Discontinuing Students describes students who have previously been enrolled in an elective language class but are currently not. This indicates that they were at one stage interested in studying an elective L2, as opposed to the Discontinuing Students who have never had an interest and have never enrolled in an elective L2. Like the

Undecided Students, New Discontinuing Students are classified as having a medium level of interest as they have previously studied an elective L2. Only two students were identified as being in the category of New Discontinuing Students, as this was the first year they had not enrolled in an elective second language class.

#### *Discontinuing Students*

Discontinuing Students are classified by their enrolment status of not currently studying an elective L2 and having never done so, thus exhibiting a low level of motivation for L2 learning. Discontinuing Students do not want to study a second language and so they do not. There were eight students from the focus groups who were classified as Discontinuing Students.

#### *3.4.2.3 Focus Group Profiles*

Each of the research sites are detailed in terms of school type and elective language situation, along with the student composition of the group. The research sites have been labelled using letters to maintain anonymity.

##### *School A*

This site was a regional school which did not have any compulsory second language learning. An elective language subject was available in Years 9 and 10. This group consisted of six students, two females and four males, two of whom were enrolled in an elective L2 and four who were not.

##### *School B*

This metropolitan school did not offer an elective second language class once compulsory study ended after Year 8. This group consisted of three students, one male in Year 9, and two females, one in Year 9 and one in Year 10, none of whom were enrolled in an elective L2.

*School C*

School C was a metropolitan school which did not offer elective L2s past Year 8. Instead, students were able to study an elective L2 via another school. There were three Year 10 females in this focus group, two whom were studying an elective L2 and one who was not.

*School D*

At this metropolitan school languages were compulsory in Year 7 after which they became elective. This focus group consisted of five students, none of whom were enrolled in an elective LOTE class. The three females were Year 10 students, while the two males were both in Year 9.

*School E*

This was a metropolitan school which offered elective second language learning in Years 9 and 10 after compulsory study in both Year 7 and 8. One of the larger focus groups involving eight students, two students were not enrolled in an elective L2 compared to six who were. There were three females and five males.

*School F*

School F was metropolitan and offered two elective languages through to Year 12, after compulsory language study ended after Year 8. It was possible to conduct two separate focus groups at this school, one for the six students who were enrolled in an elective L2 and one for the four students who were not. All students were male.

*School G*

This site was a metropolitan school which offered two elective languages. This focus group consisted of two Year 12 students, one male and one female, who were both enrolled in an elective language.

#### 3.4.2.4 *Data collection*

The second phase of data collection aimed to enrich the survey data with qualitative data obtained through focus group interviews. The term ‘focus group interview’ was initially a type of group interview used in marketing and political research, however the term is now interchangeable with ‘group interview’ (Punch, 2014; Dörnyei, 2007). The term ‘focus group interview’ has been used exclusively throughout the present study. Focus groups are a popular method in social science research because they are more natural than individual interviews and participant-centred which lessens the influence of the interviewer on the participants (Hennink, 2013).

The interviews had a semi-structured format and used Tomlinson’s (1989) ‘hierarchical focusing’, which aims to ensure coverage of the interviewer’s agenda and minimize the interviewer’s influence of interviewees’ responses. This is achieved by constructing an interview agenda which begins with the most general question, thus allowing the interviewees to spontaneously cover as much of the topic as possible. Further questions and prompts are used if needed to elicit more information (Tomlinson, 1989). Consistent with an explanatory mixed methods design, the focus group interview schedule was created based on the analysis of survey data to identify key themes and areas requiring further explanation (see Appendix H). Focus groups were chosen to maximise student participation as group interviews are more natural than individual interviews and therefore participants can be more forthcoming (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1994); in a similar vein both Hartas (2009) and Hennink (2013) suggest that the processes of constructing meaning are more naturalistic in a group setting, which therefore elicits more spontaneity from participants. Focus group interviews were also chosen based on pragmatics in regards to time, with more

participants and research sites able to be included in the study during the data collection time frame than if individual interviews were conducted (Creswell, 2015; Gibbs, 1997). Two important advantages of using focus group interviews are suggested by Creswell (2015), who believes that “focus group interviews are advantageous when the interaction among interviewees will likely yield the best information and when the interviewees are similar to and cooperative with each other” (p. 217). This is particularly relevant in a school setting with student participants, who are able to build upon and respond to their peers’ comments in the focus group, which as Karvin et al. (2006) suggest, “responses from their peers can support and encourage articulation of individual perspectives” (p. 89). This is supported by Punch (2014) who argues that the group situation of the interview can “stimulate people in making explicit their views, perceptions, motives and reasons” (p. 147). Both of these points were observed during the interviews, with students either continuing the topic of conversation that another student had started, or by stimulating others to share their own point of view.

The use of focus group interviews to deepen quantitative survey data is a standard method in explanatory mixed methods (Punch, 2014); however, there are some disadvantages of focus group interviews which include: the lack of control the interviewer has over the discussion; difficulty identifying the interviewees during transcription of audio recordings; and difficulty of taking notes during the group facilitation (Creswell, 2015). Karvin et al. (2006) also highlight the issue that “not all interviewees will be equally articulate and perceptive” (p. 89) which can lead to limited responses to questions and a lack of contribution from these participants. An awareness of these issues may assist in alleviating the disadvantageous, however the

benefits of using focus group interviews in the present research design were greater than the disadvantages.

The focus groups were held during students' school hours at a time that was agreed upon between the school and researcher. The interviews were expected to take between 30 and 45 minutes each, and there was a range of times on completion of data collection, with the shortest lasting 28 minutes and the longest 56 minutes. Participation in this phase was voluntary and students were included in based on their self-selection from the survey. Schools were provided with the names of their students who had been selected for the focus group interview, and were required to distribute the information and consent forms (see appendices I-L). Students under the age of 18 years required parent/guardian consent to participate in the focus group interviews. The school distributed and collected consent forms in preparation for the data collection schedule, which were given to the researcher on arrival at the research site prior to the beginning of the focus group interview. Students without consent forms were not allowed to participate.

Individual interviews had been included in the research design as an additional qualitative method to gather a deeper understanding of the data from focus groups. In acknowledgement of the disadvantages of focus group interviews, it was perceived that some students may have appeared unwilling to discuss certain topics in a group setting, and thus the option of inviting students to participate in an individual interview were included in the design brief. Upon conducting the focus groups however, the researcher was satisfied with the atmosphere that was created and the appearance of students engaging with each other in discussion. At no research site did any student appear to be withholding sensitive data, nor did any sensitive data come

to light that required further exploration to enhance the explanation of the phenomenon being studied. Therefore, the conclusion of the focus group interviews signalled the end of the data collection period for the study, and it was possible to begin the qualitative analysis and focus on the quantitative analysis in earnest.

#### 3.4.2.5 Analysis

For the qualitative data, the data management program NVivo 11 was utilised, which allowed the online organisation of data. This was useful during the iterative nature of qualitative analysis, where themes were often reorganised and redefined. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used to analyse the qualitative data obtained from the focus group interviews. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a foundational method for analysing qualitative data which is “independent of theory and epistemology, and can be applied *across* a range of theoretical and independent approaches” (p.78, original emphasis). This, along with the flexibility that it offers, led to the choice of this method of analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as “a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (p. 79). The guidelines to conducting thematic analysis that are outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) were followed to ensure a deliberate and rigorous analysis was achieved.

Once the qualitative data were collected, the first step was transcribing the audio recordings. Two of these were completed by the researcher, before time constraints required the remaining six to be transcribed professionally. Thematic analysis first began by immersion in the data, which is the first phase of Braun and Clarke’s (2006) guide: ‘Phase 1: familiarizing yourself with the data’. Multiple readings were done for each transcript while checking it against the original audio



recording of the interview for accuracy, which was especially important for the six which were transcribed professionally. This required a very close reading of the data, which is a vital step to become “familiar with the breadth and depth of the content” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87), and thus multiple close readings enabled a strong familiarisation with each transcript. This involved ‘active’ reading, which involves searching for meanings and patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Having personally collected the data, the researcher came to the analysis with prior knowledge of it and some initial analytic thoughts. As suggested by Braun and Clarke’s (2006) thematic analysis guide, notes were taken and marking ideas for coding were recorded. This was done in part by creating summaries of each interview, using NVivo’s memo tool, which described the context of each research site, the background ‘stories’ of participants and the overall ‘gist’ of the interview, and creating a working list of possible codes. Creating summaries and potential codes provided an initial ‘big picture’ of sites and participants, and built on the previous analytical thoughts and ideas that stemmed from the act of data collection.

The next step of thematic analysis was to begin coding the data (‘Phase 2: generating initial codes’, Braun & Clarke, 2006). Punch (2014) describes coding as attaching meaning to data by applying labels to pieces of data. Codes can be attached to individual words, or small or large sections of data. Codes were created using the initial list from the first phase, which were inductive and deductive (created from the data directly or created based on theory). Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest to “work systematically through the entire data set, giving full and *equal* attention to each data item, and identifying interesting aspects in the data item that may form the basis of repeated patterns (themes) across the data set” (p. 89). This phase involved first level

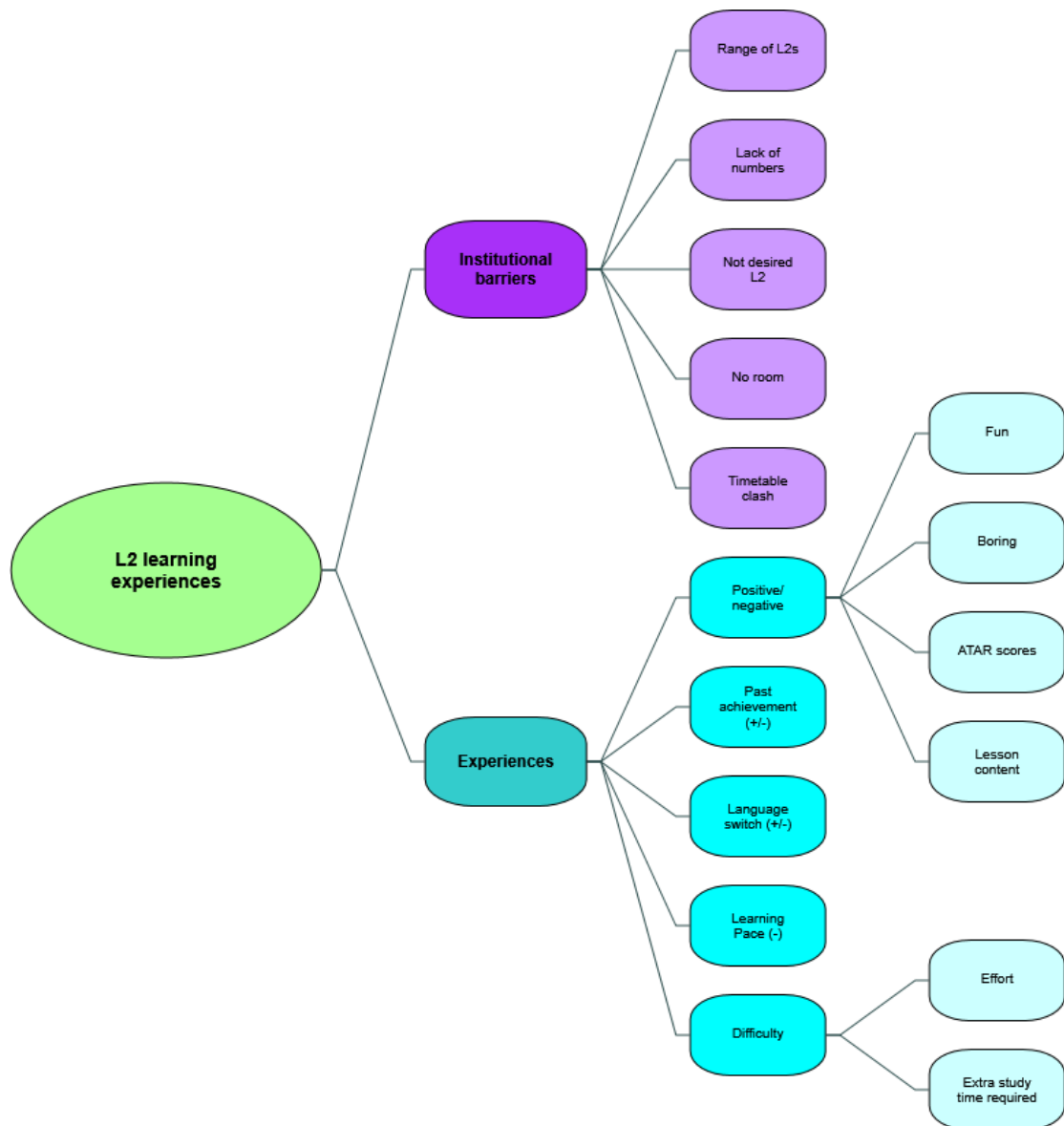
coding, where codes are more descriptive than inferential, and are summarising the data, whereas they become more refined and interpretive in later stages during higher order coding (Punch, 2014).

The third phase of analysis is termed ‘searching for themes’ by Braun and Clarke (2006) and is the phase where codes are analysed in terms of possible relationships between them and how they fit into overarching themes. Re-focusing at the broader levels of theme involves collating codes which align to form common themes, and also considering the relationship of themes themselves, such as whether the related codes form an overarching theme or a sub-theme. In the analysis, this phase involved collating codes and organising them into the overarching themes of Dörnyei’s (2005) L2 Motivational Self System dimensions (Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self, and L2 Learning Experiences). There were a number of sub-themes within these three dimensions, especially in the L2 Learning Experiences.

The following figures demonstrate the processes of Phases 3 and 4 of the thematic analysis, using two themes as an example (the full final thematic mind map of the L2 Learning Experiences dimension is presented as Figure 3.6). Figure 3.3 is part of the initial thematic mind map for the themes ‘Institutional Barriers’ and ‘Experiences’. Both themes had five sub themes, with some ‘Experiences’ sub themes including sub themes of their own. This mind map was created during Braun and Clarke’s (2006) third phase, ‘searching for themes’, where “essentially, you are starting to analyse your codes and consider how different codes may combine to form an overarching theme” (p. 89). Using Dörnyei’s (2005) L2MSS framework, there were three overarching dimensions in which themes could be categorised, which provided an initial starting point. As described, the next step was to begin the analysis

of which codes could combine to create potential themes within those dimensions.

Careful meta-analysis was required during this phase due to the hierarchy of themes.



*Figure 3.3:* Phase 3 - initial mind map of two main themes in the L2 Learning Experiences dimension

Figure 3.4 illustrates the next development of the mind map, during level one of the fourth phase of thematic analysis, ‘reviewing themes’, where sub themes have been collapsed into each other to form one theme. This is evident within the

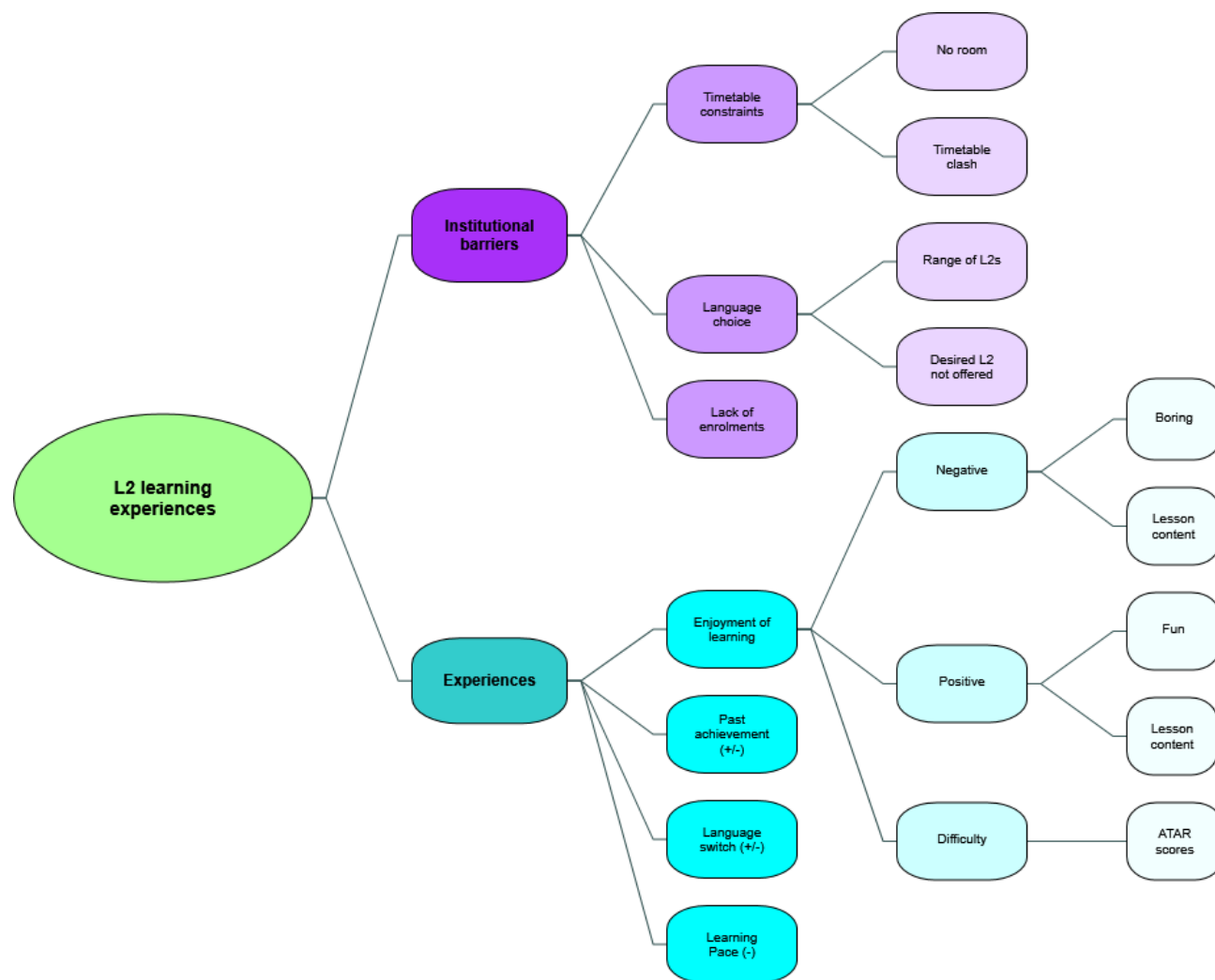


Figure 3.4: Phase 4 - developed thematic mind map of two main themes of the L2 Learning Experiences dimension

‘Institutional Barriers’ theme for the new sub theme ‘Timetable constraints’ which was created by combining the previous sub themes ‘no room’ and ‘timetable clash’, and the other new sub theme ‘Language choice’, a collation of ‘range of L2s’ and ‘not desired L2’. In this figure, the third and fourth level of sub themes demonstrate how they were combined to form the overarching sub theme. This made the distinctions between themes clearer, as they were similar ideas, and was an appropriate step as the data within the new themes cohered together meaningfully (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This process was completed by reading the data coded at each theme and ensuring they formed a coherent pattern. If not, the creation of new themes, collapsing of existing themes or discarding them from the analysis was required, until the candidate thematic map was satisfactory (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Level two involved a similar process, but it was expanded for the entire data set, thus ensuring that the themes were valid in relation to the data set and to recode any additional data, which may have been previously missed due to different themes, into the validated themes. After explaining the second level process, Braun and Clarke (2006) state that if the “candidate thematic map ‘accurately’ reflects the meanings evident in the data set as a whole” (p. 91) (the term ‘accurately’ being dependent upon the chosen theoretical and analytical approach) it is time to move on to phase five, otherwise further reviewing and refining is required. Figure 3.5 displays the final thematic map for the two example main themes at the conclusion of phase four.

The final phase of Braun and Clarke’s (2006) guide before producing the actual report involves identifying the essence of each theme and determining what aspect of the data it captures. This is performed by returning to “collated data extracts for each theme, and organizing them into a coherent and internally consistent account,

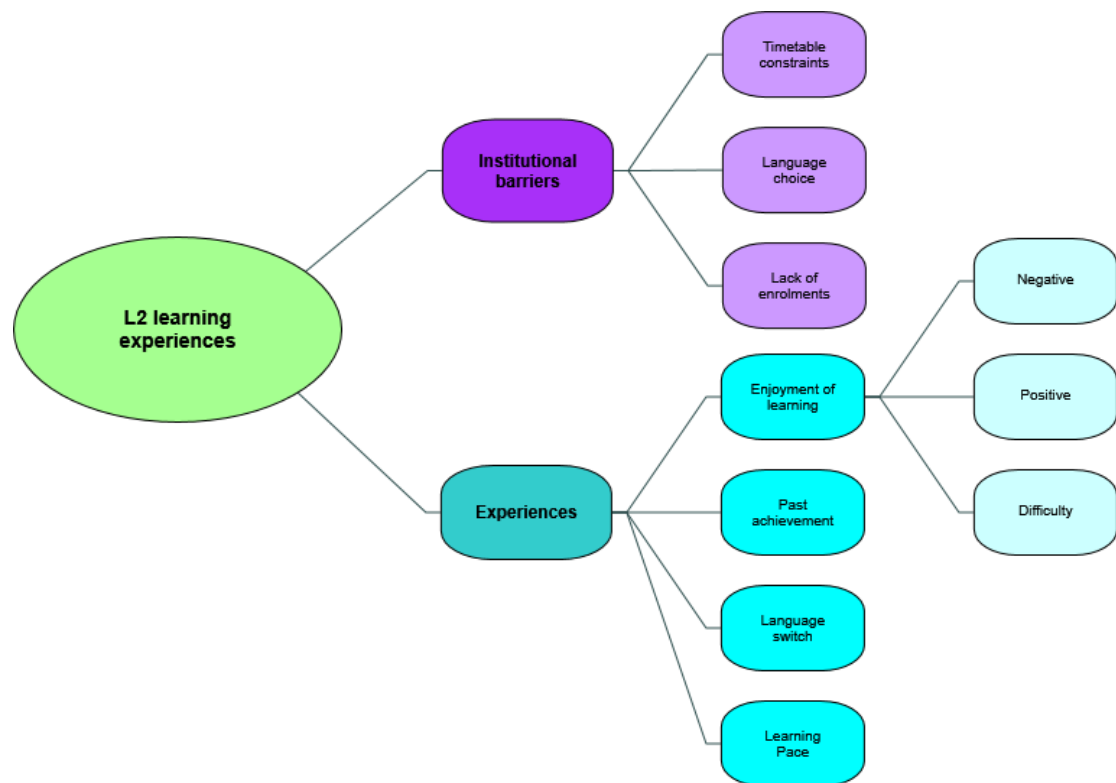


Figure 3.5: Phase 4 - final thematic mind map of two main themes of the L2 Learning Experiences dimension

with accompanying narrative” (p. 92). It was during this phase that data extracts were selected which best described the essence of the theme. It was also integral to describe each theme by identifying what was of interest and why, and to consider the ‘story’ that it was telling, individually as well as within the broader ‘story’ of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Therefore the formation of the qualitative aspect of the results chapter emerged as themes were introduced and described, and data extracts were selected and organised to logically present the theme.

Phase five also included finalising the names of themes for the final report. For example, the main theme ‘Experiences’ was renamed ‘Historical Orientations’. It had been beneficial to read Chapter 5 of Ham’s (2008) thesis to understand the

development of his themes, and it was decided that three themes would be named based on three of his thematic categories, as they provided a concise description of the data contained in each theme. Thus his thematic categories ‘Future Orientation – plans’, ‘Historical orientations – past achievements’ and ‘Enjoyment of Language Study’ became the present study’s main themes ‘Future Orientations’ and ‘Historical Orientations’, and the sub theme ‘Enjoyment of learning’, respectively.

Due to the ‘defining and naming’ focus of this phase, the final writing stage only required the addition of segues and some further elaboration within each theme to present a coherent account of the data. See Figure 3.6 for the final thematic mind map which informed the layout of the qualitative findings in the next chapter.

### **3.5 Chapter Summary**

In this chapter a detailed outline of the methodology and method of this study was presented. This began with the description and rationale for the use of mixed methods as the overarching methodology of the study. A combination approach of worldviews was adopted, moving from postpositivism (phase 1) to constructivism (phase 2), which informed the mixed method design. This outline of paradigms was followed by the ethical considerations which underpinned the design of the study, especially regarding data collection. Each phase of the methods were then described, including the participants, data collection, and analyses. In the following chapter the findings of the data obtained from the participants in the study via the previously outlined methods of data collection phases are presented.

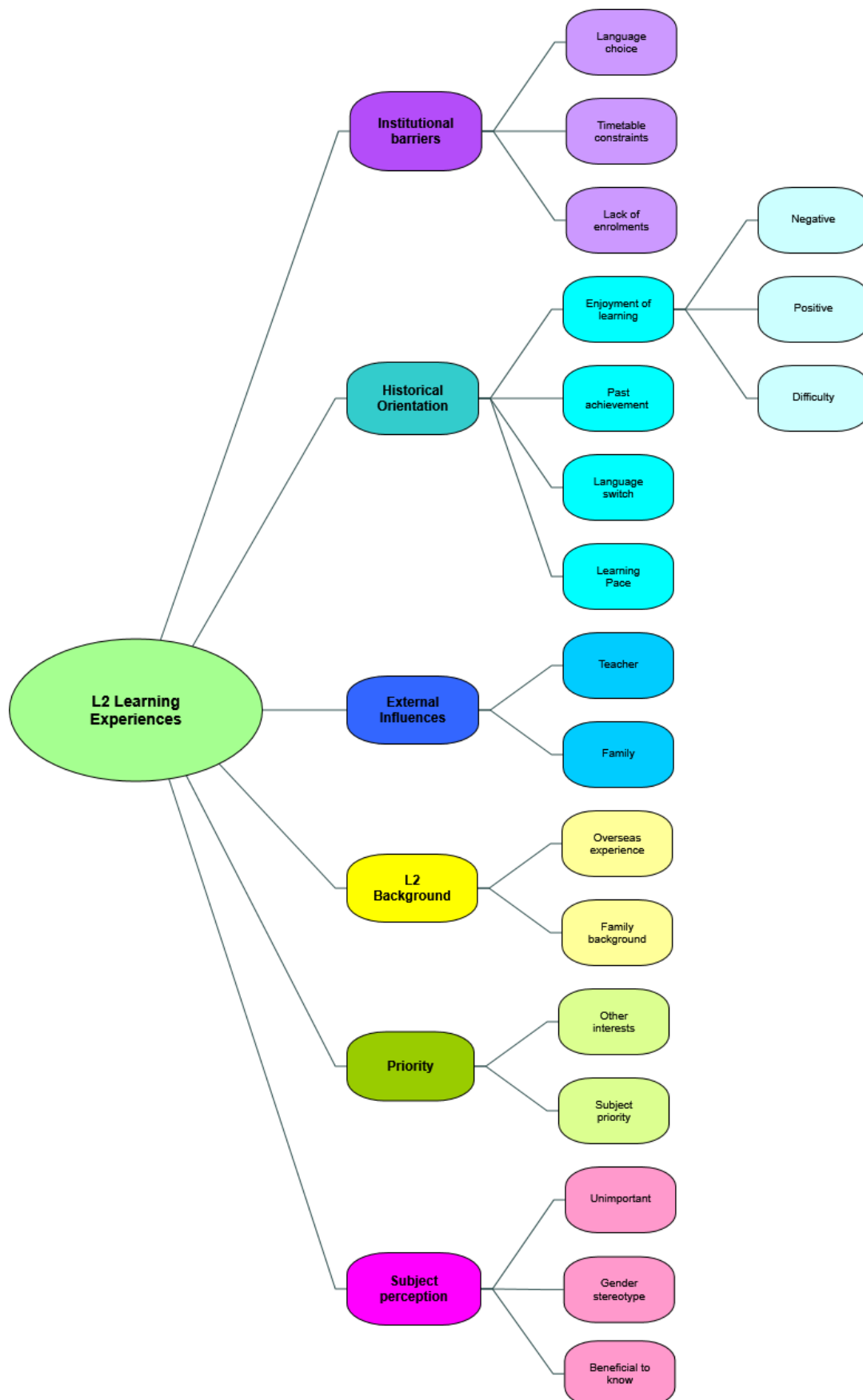


Figure 3.6: Final thematic mind map for L2 Learning Experiences dimension



# Chapter 4

## Results

### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the findings of both the quantitative and qualitative phases are reported. The chapter is divided into two sections, where first the quantitative data, gathered from the survey, are reported, followed by the qualitative findings collected from the focus group interviews. Participants and research sites were described in Chapter Three. This chapter begins with the report on the quantitative data, which is presented descriptively and inferentially. Initially, general data regarding the overall composition of the survey respondents is reported, then data from the survey questions regarding reasons for enrolment choice are explored. This is followed by each component of the survey, where data were analysed using measures of central tendency and variability. The last section of the quantitative phase reports relationships between variables using hierarchical linear regressions. While the present study uses the term ‘L2’ to describe second language learning, the quantitative data is mostly reported using the term ‘LOTE’ (Languages Other than English) as this was the term used throughout the instrument and thus enables clarity during the reporting of results. Next, the qualitative data are presented according to the three dimensions of Dörnyei’s (2005) L2 Motivational Self System framework. Within this framework, data extracts are classified according to students’ motivational category.

Participants in the focus group were classified by their commitment to second language learning and their enrolment circumstances into one of five categories: Continuing Students, Forced Discontinuing Students, Undecided Students, New Discontinuing Students, and Discontinuing Students. This classification system assists to develop a deeper understanding of the research problem investigated, the factors that affect students' motivation to enrol in an elective L2 subject.

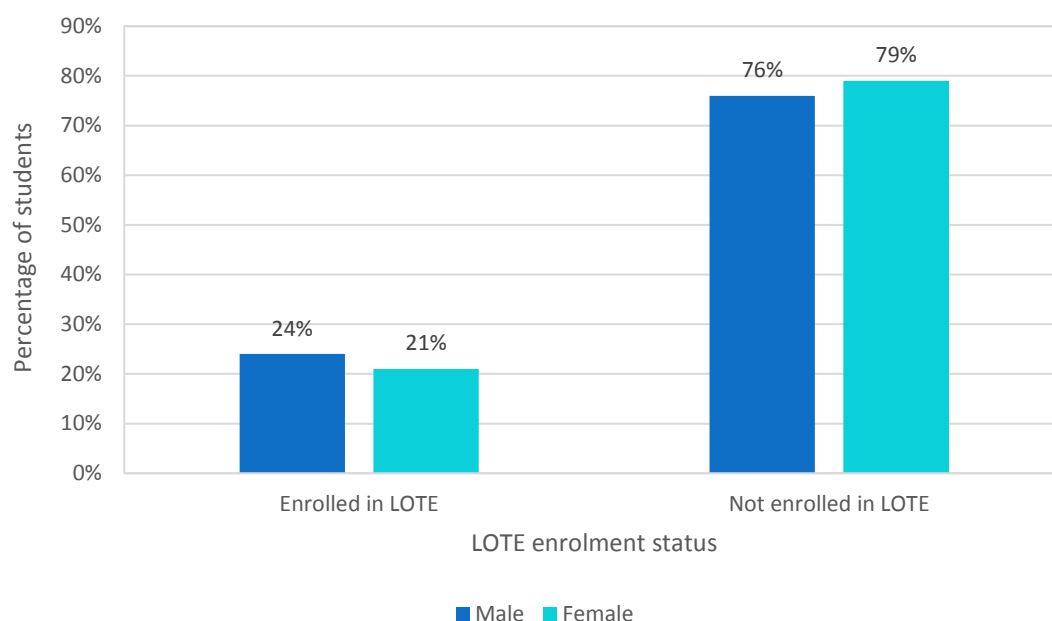
## **4.2 Quantitative**

As described in Chapter Three, the survey instrument was based on that of Zammit's (1992), with some minor changes and the addition of items regarding the Ideal and Ought-to L2 selves from Dörnyei's (2010) instrument. There were a total of 528 responses, however only 372 were fully completed. Partial completions were kept in the data sample, thus item response totals vary throughout the quantitative section of this chapter. Unless otherwise stated, the term "agree" combines the Likert scale responses of "strongly agree", "agree" and "slightly agree" while the term "disagree" combines the "strongly disagree", "disagree" and "slightly disagree" responses as a useful way of categorising the data in regards to student agreement or disagreement.

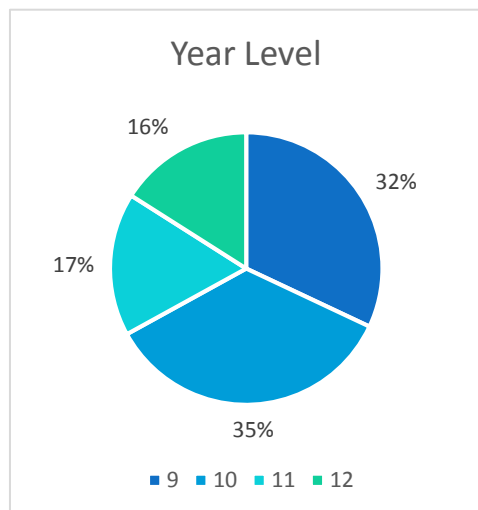
### **4.2.1 Characteristics of survey respondents**

Participation in this study was fairly equal in terms of gender, with 48% male and 52% female. In terms of elective second language enrolment, 21% of students (24% male, 21% female) were enrolled compared to 79% (76% male, 79% female) who were not. See Figure 4.1 for a representation of gender and L2 enrolment. There were more responses from students in secondary school, with 32% of students who were in Year 9, 35% in Year 10, 17% in Year 11 and 16% in Year 12 (Figure 4.2). Regarding

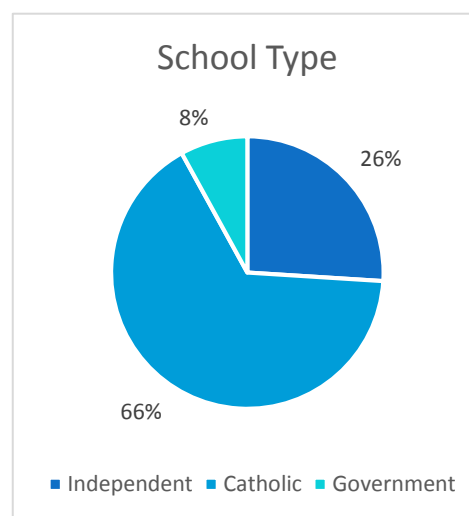
school type, 26% of students attended an Independent school, compared to 66 r cent Catholic and eight percent Government (Figure 4.3).



*Figure 4.1:* LOTE enrolment status and gender of participants

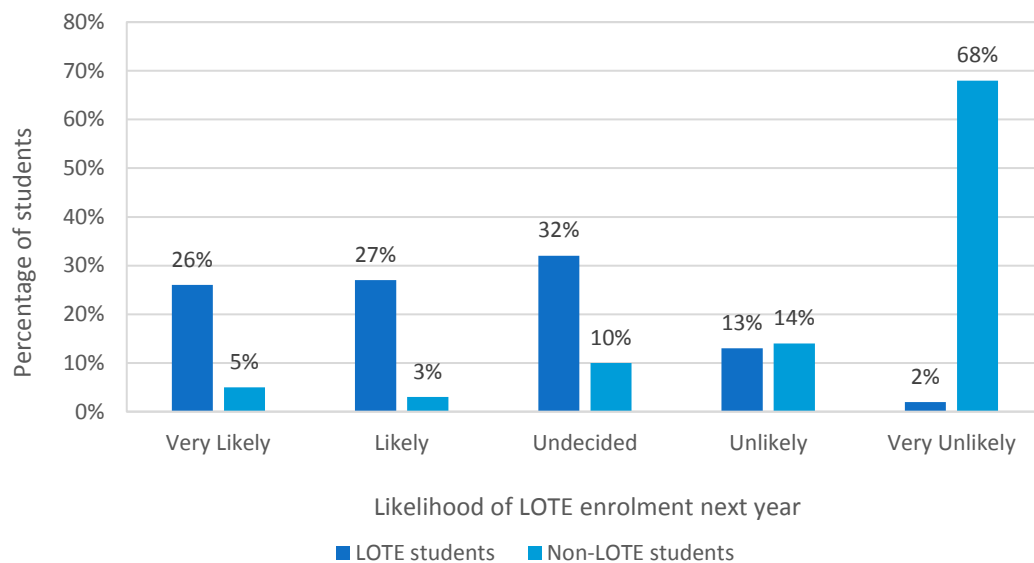


*Figure 4.3:* Year level of participants



*Figure 4.2:* School type of participants

When non-LOTE students were asked how likely they were to study an elective second language next year, five percent responded ‘very likely’, three percent ‘likely’, 10% ‘undecided’, 14% ‘unlikely’ and 68% ‘very unlikely’. This is compared to LOTE students, who displayed opposite future plans: 26% responded ‘very likely’, 27% ‘likely’, 32% ‘undecided’, 13% ‘unlikely’, and two percent ‘very unlikely’ (see Figure 4.4 for comparison). LOTE students are more evenly spread over the ‘very likely’, ‘likely’ and ‘undecided’ responses compared to the non-LOTE students where the majority responded ‘very unlikely’. Just over half (53%) of LOTE students were at least likely to study a language next year, without considering the possible enrolments from the ‘undecided’ category. Including half (16%) of the students who were undecided about continuation increases the likelihood of LOTE enrolments to 69%.



*Figure 4.4:* Likelihood of student enrolment in an elective second language subject next year

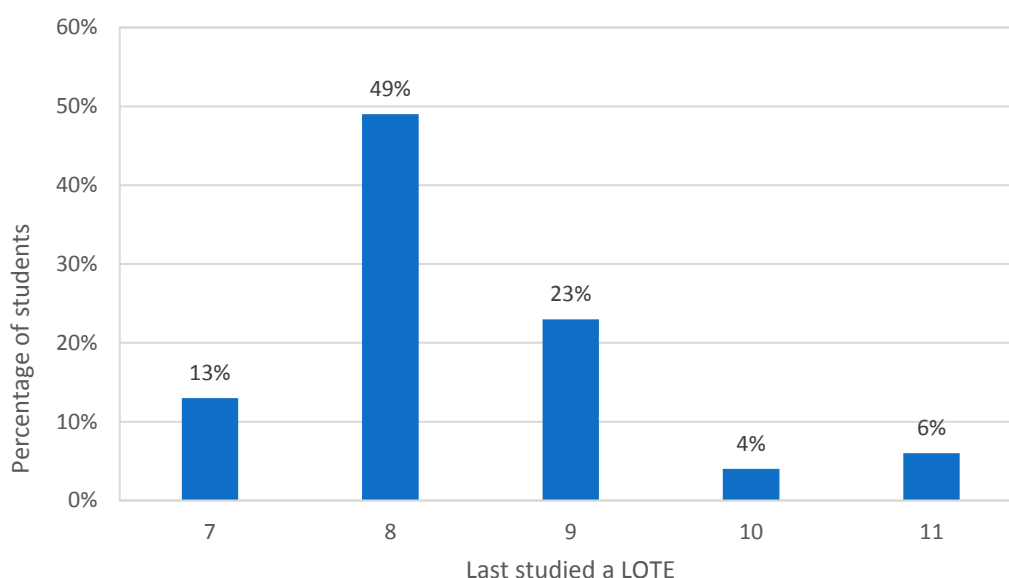
Of the students who were not currently enrolled in a second language and who responded to the question regarding the last time they studied one, 46% indicated Year 7, 31% for Year 8, 12% for Year 9, three percent for Year 10 and two percent for Year 11 (seven percent responded ‘other’), which demonstrates the enrolment decline throughout schooling years. Taking into account the different Year levels of students answering this question, a cross-tabulation table was created using Qualtrics to depict the Year level of respondents and the last year that they studied a second language (see Figure 4.5).

		What year are you in at school?			
		9	10	11	12
What year level did you last study a LOTE?	7	55%	64%	16%	13%
	8	31%	15%	48%	49%
	9	7%	8%	25%	23%
	10	0%	1%	9%	4%
	11	1%	1%	0%	6%
	Other	6%	12%	2%	4%

*Figure 4.5: Non-LOTE students’ current Year level and the last time they studied a LOTE*

As shown, for the Year 9 and 10 students the majority last studied a LOTE in Year 7, compared to the Year 11 and 12 students where the majority were Year 8. For all Years the enrolment figures declined up to the Year they were currently in, except Year 12, where an extra two percent studied a second language in Year 11 compared to Year 10. Figure 4.6 depicts only Year 12 students and the last year that they studied a LOTE, which clearly demonstrates the attrition rate for elective L2s throughout schooling years.

This demonstrated enrolment decline leads to the next section of results which specifically reports on the questions ‘why did you continue with your LOTE study?’ and ‘why did you not continue with your LOTE study?’ and explores students’ responses.



*Figure 4.6: Year 12 students’ last year of LOTE study*

## 4.2.2 On the big question ‘Why?’ – A snapshot

### 4.2.2.1 Why students do enrol

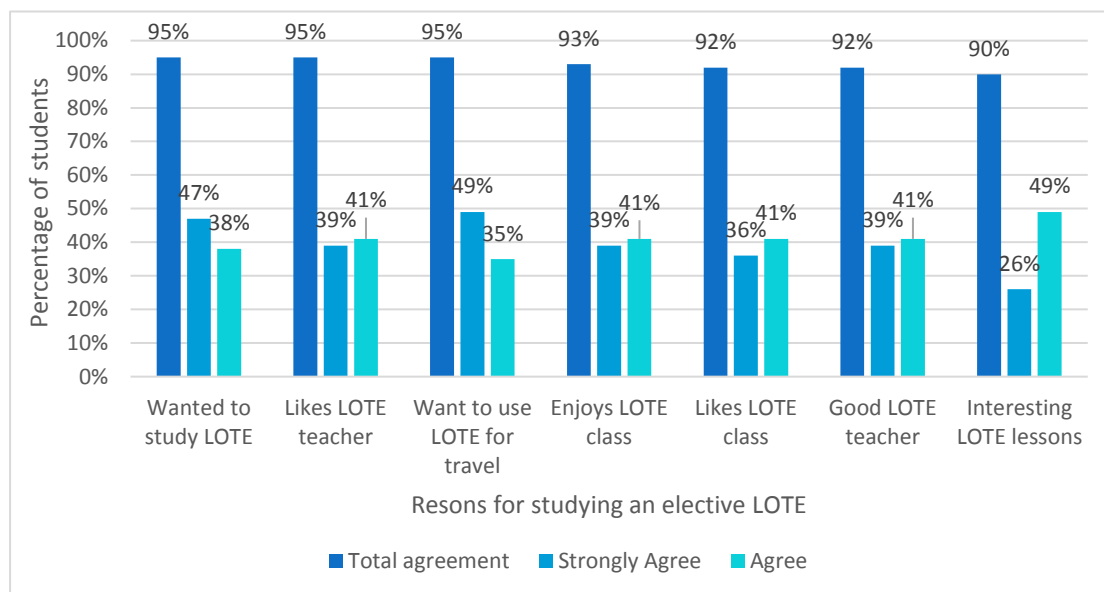
Students currently enrolled in an elective LOTE were asked to respond to 17 statements regarding why they had chosen to continue with their elective L2 study. The most prevalent reasons for their continuation are outlined in Table 4.1. Prevalence was classified as statements receiving an agreement score 90% or above. There were three statements which all received an agreement response of 95% and they were: I wanted to study a LOTE; I like the LOTE teacher; and I want to use LOTE when I travel.

Looking deeper into these results, Figure 4.7 depicts the percentages for the ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’ responses for the seven most prevalent reasons. The highest ‘strongly agree’ score was 49% for the statement regarding using LOTE for travel, followed by 47% for ‘I wanted to study a LOTE’ and 45% for ‘I like the LOTE teacher’. The highest score for the ‘agree’ scale was 49% for the statement ‘the lessons are interesting’, followed by 43% for ‘I like the LOTE class’. There were three statements which received a score of 41% for the ‘agree’ scale, and they were: I enjoy the LOTE class; there is a good teacher; and the teacher advised me to continue with LOTE.

*Table 4.1:* Highest percentages of student agreement with statements of LOTE continuation reasons

#	Likert scale statement	Total %	Male %	Female %
1	I wanted to study a LOTE	95	95	95
2	I like the LOTE teacher	95	100	90
3	I want to use LOTE when I travel	95	98	93
4	I enjoy the LOTE class	93	93	93
5	I like the LOTE class	92	93	90
6	There is a good LOTE teacher	92	95	88
7	The LOTE lessons are interesting	90	91	88

Interestingly, the third statement was not one of the prevalent reasons for continuation, however it was within the next three highest reasons for LOTE continuation. The next three highest responses received 80% or more, with the eighth most prevalent reason ‘I think it is important to study a LOTE’ scoring 88% of total student agreement (86% male, 90% female). This is followed by the statements ‘I am good at LOTE’ (85%) and ‘the teacher advised me to continue with LOTE’ (80%). It is interesting to note that the three statements regarding the teacher all received very



*Figure 4.7:* Extent of agreement for the most prevalent reasons for students' LOTE continuation

high agreement scores (80%, 92% and 95%), indicating that LOTE teachers are a strong influential factor on students' decisions to continue their elective second language study. In comparison, the statements which received the lowest scores, and thus were not indicated as influential reasons for continuing LOTE study, were 'LOTE is compulsory' (88% of students disagreed) and 'I needed one more subject' (78% of disagreement). The next three lowest scoring statements were 'I need the LOTE for my future studies' (57% agreement), 'I find studying a LOTE is easy' (62% agreement) and 'my friends are studying a LOTE' (65% agreement). The lowest scores are presented in Table 4.2. The results for all 17 statements are presented in Appendix M.



*Table 4.2:* Lowest percentages of student agreement with statements of LOTE continuation reasons

#	Likert scale statement	Total %	Male %	Female %
17	LOTE is compulsory	12	7	17
16	I needed one more subject	22	20	24
15	I need the LOTE for my future studies	57	59	55
14	I find studying a LOTE is easy	62	61	62
13	My friends are studying LOTE	65	70	60

The prevalent reasons for continuation suggest that LOTE students are experiencing high satisfaction levels with their teachers and classes, with the additional reasons of wanting to study a LOTE and use it while travelling. The next section explores the reasons for discontinuation of LOTE study.

#### *4.2.2.2 Why students don't enrol*

Students not enrolled in an elective L2 subject were asked to use Likert scale responses for statements regarding why this was so. The most prevalent reasons for discontinuing, receiving a total agreement score of 50% or above, are outlined in Table 4.3. Of the 17 possible statements offered for why students chose to discontinue their language learning, the most prevalent reason was students indicating that they believed that they could use English if they travelled overseas (74%). This was followed by the reasons 'I do NOT need LOTE for my future studies' (66%) and 'I could NOT fit LOTE into my course of study' (63%). Examining these reasons further, Figure 4.8 shows the percentage of students who either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with these statements. The highest responses for the 'strongest agree' scale were the statements 'the LOTE I wanted to study was not offered' (24%) and 'I could NOT fit LOTE into my course of study' (20%), while the highest responses for the

‘agree’ scale were the statements ‘I did NOT need LOTE for my future studies’ (31%) and ‘I can use English if I go overseas’ (29%).

Three of the four lowest scoring statements related to the teacher, with a large majority of students demonstrating disagreement (see Table 4.4). The statement ‘the teacher advised me not to continue with LOTE study’ received the highest responses for both the ‘strongly disagree’ and ‘disagree’ scales, with 33% and 36% respectively, suggesting that students were not explicitly advised by their teacher to discontinue. Relationships with teachers also appeared to be a low influencing factor on student discontinuation.

*Table 4.3:* Highest percentages of student agreement with statements of LOTE discontinuation reasons

#	Likert scale statement	Total %	Male %	Female %
1	I can use English if I go overseas	74	74	76
2	I do NOT need LOTE for my future studies	66	64	69
3	I could NOT fit LOTE into my course of study	63	60	67
4	I found LOTE learning required constant work	61	64	60
5	The LOTE I wanted to study was NOT offered	55	54	56
6	My friends dropped LOTE	53	52	55
7	I did NOT want to study a LOTE	52	51	54
8	LOTE clashed on the timetable with subjects I preferred	50	55	47

However, it is more interesting to look at the reverse side of these statements at the students who disagreed with these reasons for discontinuing their LOTE study, and the revelations that this provides in terms of the real story behind elective L2 enrolment decline (the results for all 17 statements are presented in Appendix N.).

*Table 4.4:* Lowest percentages of student agreement with statements of LOTE discontinuation reasons

#	Likert scale statement	Total %	Male %	Female %
17	The teacher advised me not to continue with LOTE study	17	22	15
16	I did NOT get on with the LOTE teacher	29	34	23
15	I will never have an opportunity to use a LOTE	32	33	32
14	I did NOT like the LOTE teacher	37	39	36

Of most interest are the following three objective statements: LOTE clashed on the timetable with subjects I preferred; I could not fit LOTE into my course of study; and the LOTE I wanted to study was not offered. For each of these statements, more than half of the non-LOTE students agreed to some extent that this was a reason that they were not currently enrolled in an elective L2 subject (see Figure 4.9).

		Gender	
		Male	Female
LOTE clashed on the timetable with subjects I preferred.	Disagree	45%	53%
	Agree	55%	47%
I could NOT fit LOTE into my course of study.	Disagree	40%	33%
	Agree	60%	67%
The LOTE I wanted to study was NOT offered.	Disagree	46%	44%
	Agree	54%	56%

*Figure 4.8:* Objective reasons why non-LOTE students were not enrolled in an elective L2 subject

A total of 51% of non-LOTE students agreed that they experienced a timetable clash, while 64% agreed that they could not fit an L2 into their course of study (60% male, 67% female). Overall, a total of 55% of students agreed that one reason they

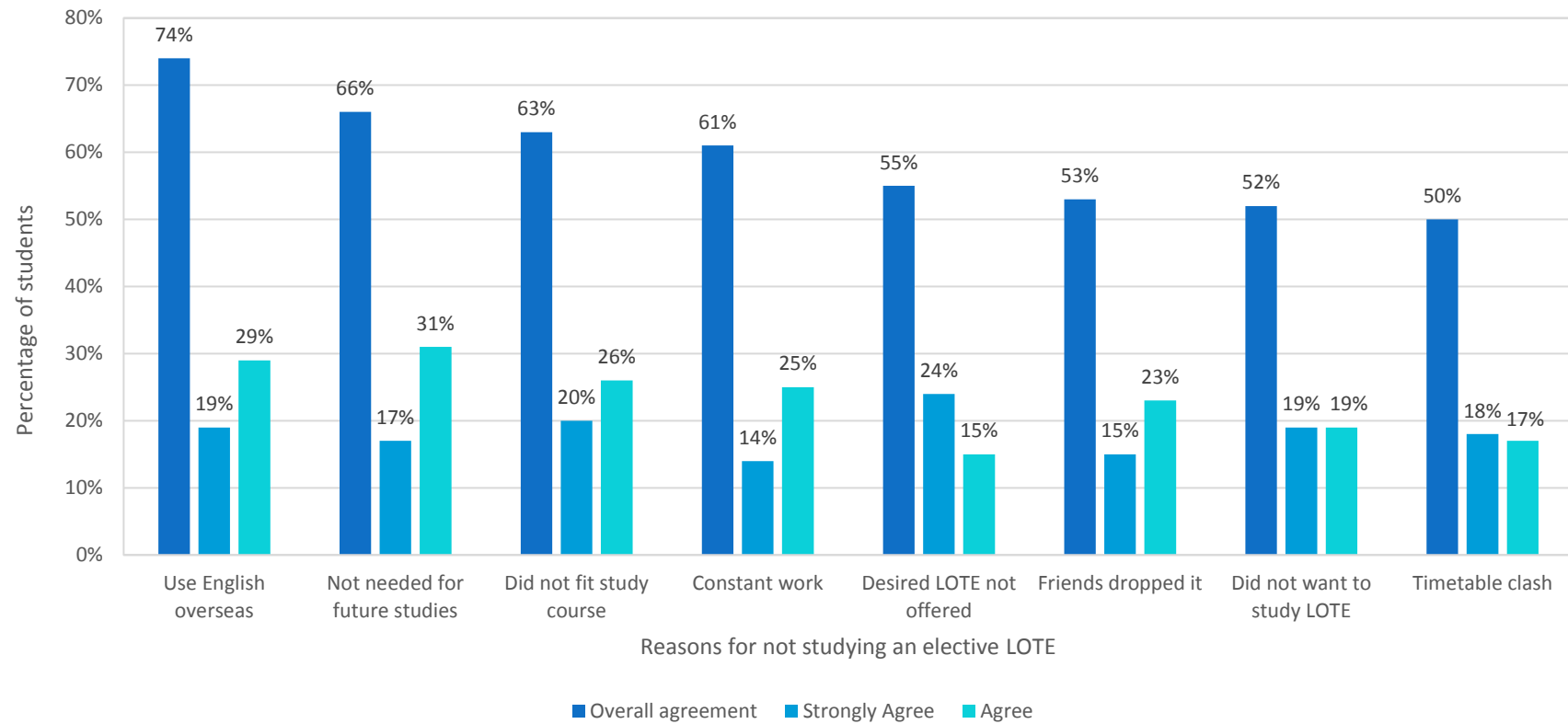


Figure 4.9: Extent of agreement for the most prevalent reasons for students' LOTE discontinuation

were not currently enrolled because the language they wanted to study was not offered. Females were more likely to agree than males, with higher percentages on two of the three statements. The statement ‘the LOTE I wanted to study was not offered’ received the highest percentage of ‘strongly agree’ responses (24%), indicating this was an important reason for students not enrolling in an elective L2.

The following five subjective statements were of interest in regards to why non-LOTE students were not enrolled in an elective L2: I did not want to study a LOTE; I did not like learning a LOTE; I will never have the opportunity to use a LOTE; I did not like the LOTE class; and LOTE will not get me a better job (see Figure 4.10). Importantly, this study shows that nearly half (47%) of non-LOTE students disagreed that they did not study an elective L2 subject because they did not want to (49% male, 46% female). Secondly, just over half (56%) of the non-LOTE students disagreed that they did not like learning a LOTE, with 55% disagreeing that they did not like the LOTE class. Again, just over half (54%) of the non-LOTE students disagreed that LOTE would not get them a better job, indicating that they believed the opposite to be true. The biggest percentage of student disagreement to a subjective statement was for the reason ‘I will never have the opportunity to use a LOTE’, with a total of 68% (67% male, 68% female) of non-LOTE students disagreeing to some extent. While these are important reasons for discontinuing for the students who did agree with these statements, of greater interest is half of the enrolment decline figures are students who enjoyed learning LOTE and have the desire to continue. These sections have presented the reasons why students continue and discontinue their LOTE study. The following section reports the statistical analyses of the data and is organised by each section of the survey.

		What is your gender?	
		Male	Female
I did NOT want to study a LOTE.	Disagree	49%	46%
	Agree	51%	54%
I did NOT like learning a LOTE.	Disagree	54%	57%
	Agree	46%	43%
I will never have an opportunity to use a LOTE.	Disagree	67%	68%
	Agree	33%	32%
I did NOT like the LOTE class.	Disagree	53%	55%
	Agree	47%	45%
LOTE will NOT get me a better job.	Disagree	55%	54%
	Agree	45%	46%

*Figure 4.10:* Subjective reasons why non-LOTE students were not enrolled in an elective L2

### 4.2.3 Statistical analyses of the data

The data from the survey were subjected to descriptive and inferential statistical analyses using the SPSS (Version 22). The descriptive analyses included the mean as a measure of central tendency and standard deviation as a measure of variability. The mean, standard deviation and correlation are reported for each section of the survey followed by a selection of hierarchical linear regressions.

#### 4.2.3.1 Section 1: Attitude to School

Section 1 of the survey assessed students overall attitude to school and school subjects. The attitude to school subscale was found to be highly reliable (16 items,  $\alpha = .85$ ).

#### 4.2.3.2 Section 2: Attitude to LOTE

Initially, a Cronbach's alpha coefficient was performed to determine the reliability of 10 subscales, eight of which were recreated from Zammit's (1992) study (with the addition of some items) and two of which were recreated from Dörnyei's (2010) study. Nine of the 10 subscales appeared to have good internal consistency: Influence of peers,  $\alpha = .77$ ; Relative importance of LOTE,  $\alpha = .77$ ; LOTE compared to other subjects,  $\alpha = .73$ ; Cultural heritage/society,  $\alpha = .56$ ; LOTE effort outside of school,  $\alpha = .83$ ; Parental influence,  $\alpha = .79$ ; Gender stigma,  $\alpha = .66$ ; Ideal L2 Self,  $\alpha = .89$ ; Ought-to L2 Self,  $\alpha = .83$ . The Relative difficulty of LOTE subscale was not found to be reliable, with  $\alpha = .16$ , therefore this subscale was omitted from the analyses. The descriptive analyses, consisting of the means, standard deviations and correlations of the eight subscales, are listed in Table 4.5.

The following data is reported in a manner similar to that of the results presented in Zammit's (1992) study for ease of comparison. The results are reported using descriptive statistics for the second section of the survey regarding students' attitudes to LOTE. In section two of the survey, students were asked a range of questions which assessed their attitude towards second language learning. Zammit (1992) grouped the questions into eight baskets of influence based on a principal components analysis which identified the main underlying factors that explained the correlation between items, thus the items are presented in the same manner in this chapter, with the addition of Baskets 9 and 10 for the Ideal and Ought-to L2 Selves items.

Table 4.5: Correlations, means and standard deviations of study variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Ideal L2 Self									
Ought-to L2 Self	.63***								
Gender stereotype	.27***	.56***							
Parental Influence	.66***	.71***	.37***						
LOTE effort outside school	.70***	.73***	.40***	.63***					
Cultural Heritage and Society	.56***	.58***	.27***	.55***	.52***				
LOTE comparison to other subjects	.59***	.58***	.33***	.52***	.56***	.42***			
Relative importance of LOTE	.79***	.59***	.27***	.62***	.60***	.59***	.54***		
Peer influence	.63***	.72***	.43***	.73***	.67***	.54***	.55***	.63***	
<i>M</i>	3.32	2.36	2.06	2.91	2.43	2.99	2.61	3.14	2.46
<i>SD</i>	1.32	1.00	0.87	1.24	1.23	1.28	1.25	1.14	1.10

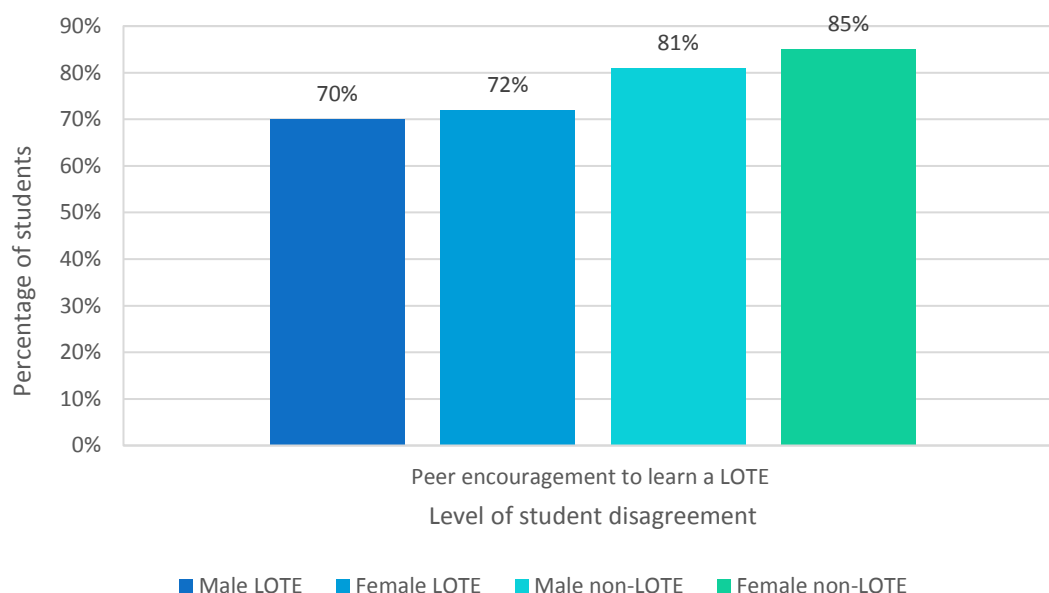
\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .



#### 4.2.3.3 Basket 1: Influence of peers

- My school friends encourage me to learn a LOTE.
- My friends say that learning a LOTE will get me a better job.
- My school friends say that Australians should learn a LOTE.

The majority of non-LOTE students (81% of males, 85% of females) disagreed that their school friends encouraged them to learn a second language, which was a similar response by LOTE students regarding their friends' encouragement, with 70% of males and 72% of females disagreeing (see Figure 4.11).



*Figure 4.11:* Level of disagreement with the statement 'my school friends encouraged me to learn a LOTE'

Only 22% of non-LOTE females agreed with the second statement regarding job perceptions, which contrasts with the 62% of LOTE females who agreed that their friends believed L2 learning would get them a better job. The contrast between the non-LOTE and LOTE males was not as significant, with the survey responses reporting 23% and 49% respectively. In regards to the final item, LOTE students

reported that their friends were more inclined to say Australians should learn a LOTE (30%) compared to non-LOTE students (20%). Overall school friends do not appear to be a major influential factor on students' LOTE enrolment decisions.

#### 4.2.3.4 Basket 2: Relative importance of LOTE compared to other subjects

- I believe all students should learn a LOTE.
- LOTE study should be compulsory up to Year 12.
- LOTE should be compulsory up to Year 10.

Overall the majority of students disagreed with these three statements. 58% (61% of non-LOTE students, 32% of LOTE students) disagreed with the first statement, 74% (77% non-LOTE, 57% LOTE) with the second and 61% (68% non-LOTE, 36% LOTE) with the third. Disagreement was more prevalent amongst the non-LOTE students for each statement (see Figure 4.12).

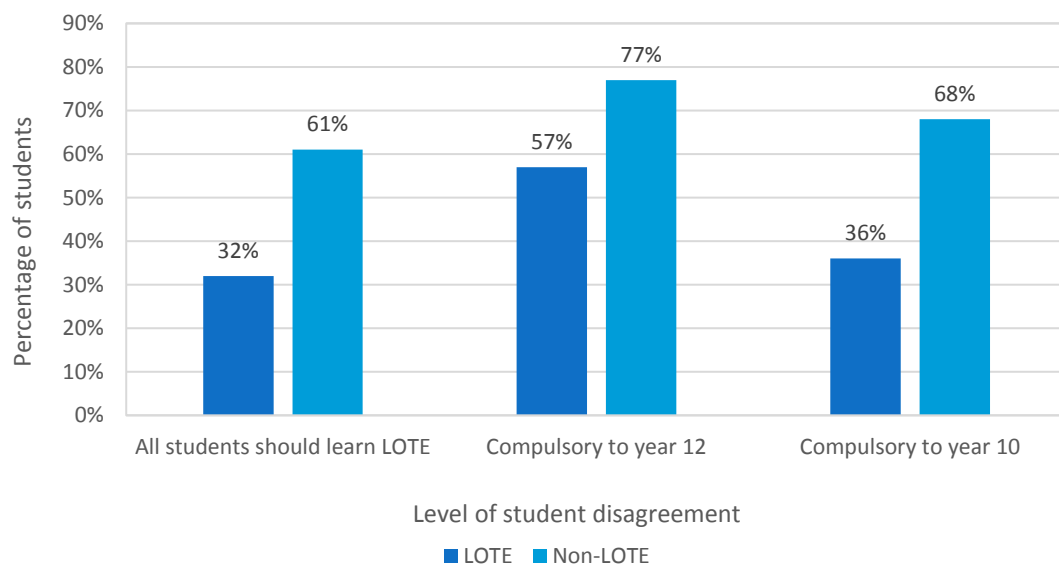
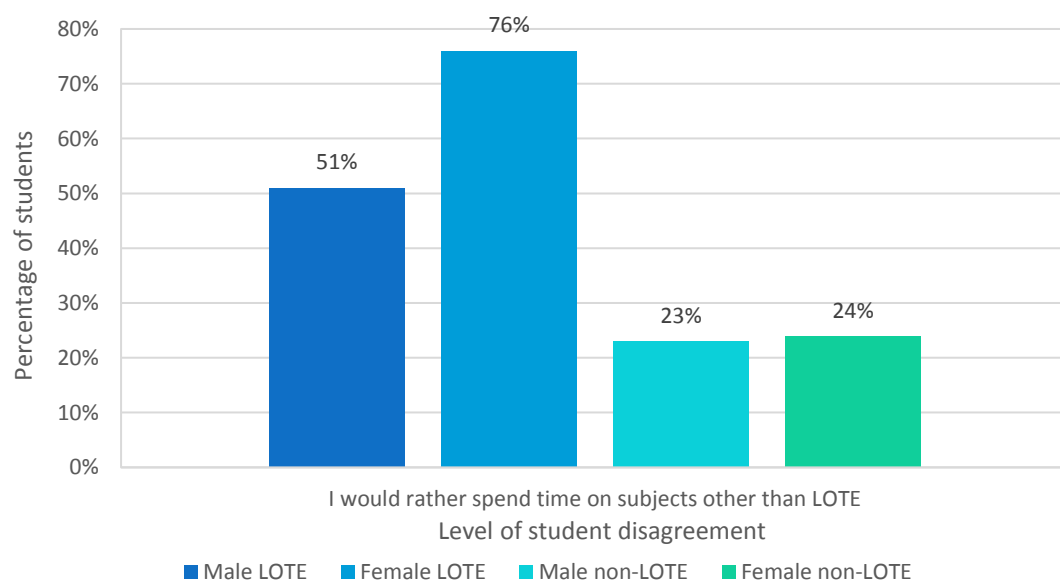


Figure 4.12: Basket 2: Relative importance of LOTE compared to other subjects

#### 4.2.3.5 Basket 3: Relative difficulty of LOTE

- Anyone who tries can learn a LOTE.
- LOTE is only for clever students.
- I would rather spend time on subjects other than LOTE.

Overall, students agreed that anyone who tries can learn a LOTE (87%). The second and third statements were negatively worded, and all students were expected to disagree with the second while LOTE students were more likely to disagree with the third. In total, 85% of students disagreed with the second statement that LOTE is only for clever students. As expected, LOTE students disagreed with preferring to spend time on subjects other than LOTE (total 51% male, 76% female) while in comparison the majority of non-LOTE students agreed (total 78% male, 75% female) (see Figure 4.13 for gender and LOTE status). Female LOTE students indicated stronger disagreement than their male LOTE counterparts, suggesting they either prefer or value their LOTE lessons more than the male students.

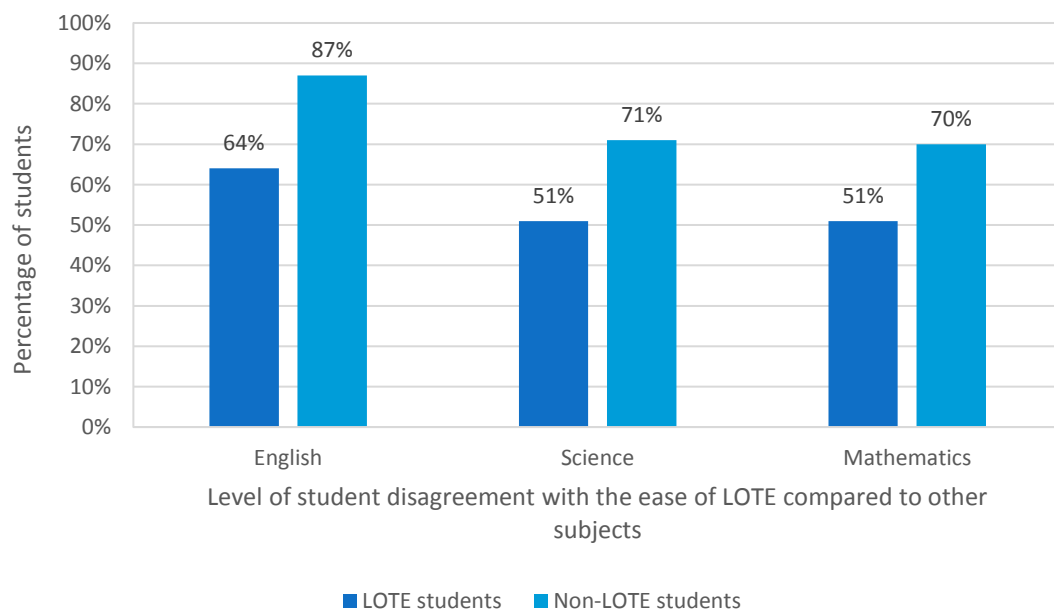


*Figure 4.13:* Level of disagreement with the statement 'I would rather spend time on subjects other than LOTE'

#### 4.2.3.6 Basket 4: Relative difficulty of LOTE compared to other subjects

- For me LOTE is easier than English.
- For me LOTE is easier than Science.
- For me LOTE is easier than Mathematics.

Overall, although to varying degrees, all students agreed that they found LOTE more difficult than English, Science and Mathematics (see Figure 4.14). LOTE students perceived their second language subject to be more difficult than English (64% disagreement with statement one), however they only marginally disagreed in terms of the subjects Science (51% disagreement) and Mathematics (51% disagreement). In comparison non-LOTE students reported higher responses of disagreement to each statement, with English (87% disagreement), Science (71% disagreement) and Mathematics (70% disagreement).

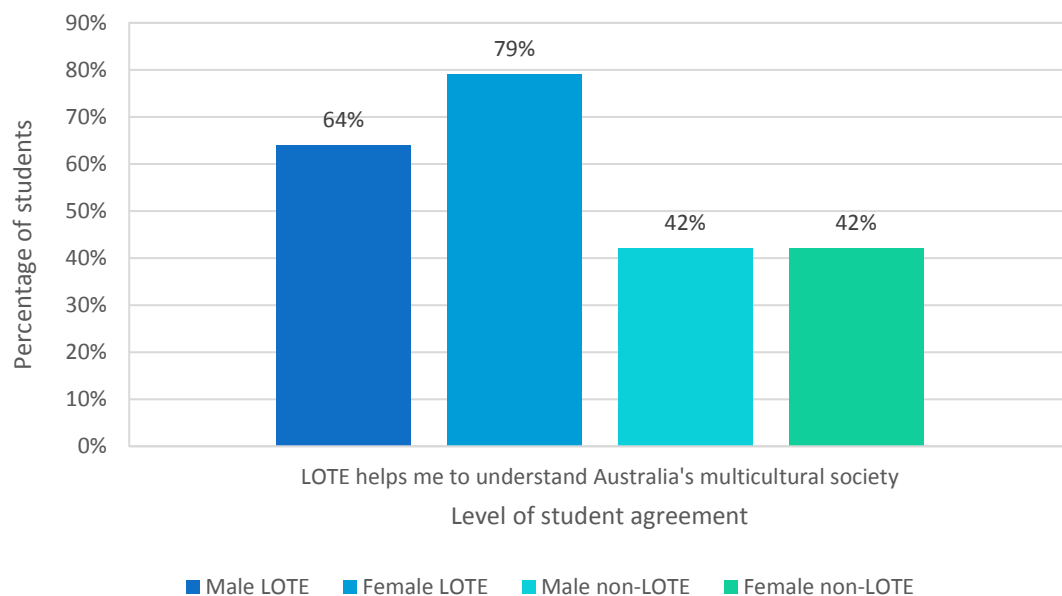


*Figure 4.14: Level of disagreement with the statements that LOTE is easier than English, Science and Mathematics*

#### 4.2.3.7 Basket 5: Cultural heritage/society

- LOTE helps me to understand Australia's multicultural society.
- LOTE will help me understand my family's cultural heritage.

LOTE students indicated stronger agreement with the first statement compared to the non-LOTE students (see Figure 4.15). 79% of LOTE females agreed that learning a second language helps them to understand the nation's multicultural society, with 64% of males agreeing. Males and females in the non-LOTE category disagreed with the statement, with a total of 58% for both genders. Overall for the second statement, 68% of students (62% LOTE, 69% non-LOTE) disagreed that LOTE helps them to understand their family's cultural heritage. This suggests that the majority of students are not particularly influenced by their family heritage, and only those students who study an elective LOTE believe it to be beneficial for better understanding our multicultural society.

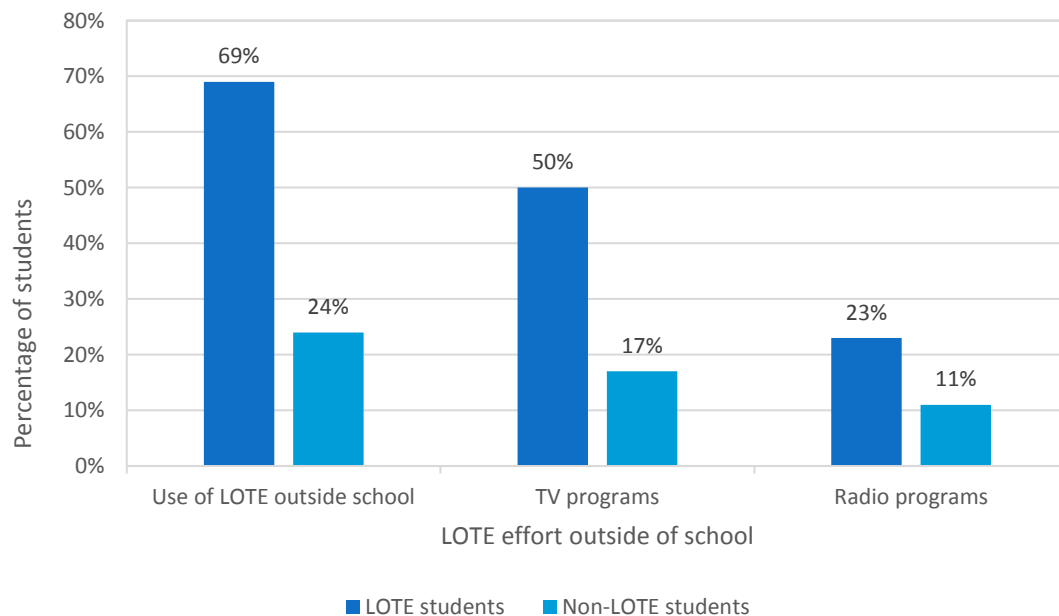


*Figure 4.15: Level of agreement with the statement 'LOTE helps me to understand Australia's multicultural society'*

#### 4.2.3.8 Basket 6: LOTE effort outside of school

- I make an effort to watch TV programs in a LOTE I have studied.
- I make an effort to listen to radio programs in a LOTE I have studied.
- I try to use LOTE outside of school.

Just over two-thirds (69%) of LOTE students agreed that they tried to use LOTE outside of school, with 50% agreeing that they made an effort to watch TV programs compared to only 23% who made an effort to listen to radio programs. For the non-LOTE students, 24% agreed that they tried to use a LOTE outside of school. In terms of making an effort to watch or listen to TV or radio programs in the LOTE they have studied, 17% and 11% of non-LOTE students respectively agreed. See Figure 4.16 for an overview of LOTE and non-LOTE students' efforts to use a LOTE outside of school.



*Figure 4.16:* Basket 6 - LOTE effort outside of school of LOTE and non-LOTE students

#### 4.2.3.9 Basket 7: Parental influence

- My parents encourage me to learn a LOTE.
- My parents tell me Australians should learn a LOTE.
- My parents tell me that learning a LOTE will get me a better job.

Overall, 75% of LOTE students agreed that their parents encouraged them to learn a LOTE (73% males, 79% females). For the non-LOTE students, 40% of males and 45% of females agreed with this statement (44% in total). LOTE students indicated more frequently that their parents thought LOTE learning would get them a better job (46% males, 70% females) compared to non-LOTE students (23% males, 22% females). In regards to parents stating that Australians should learn a LOTE, overall students were less likely to agree. As is the trend in this basket of items (see Figure 4.17), for this item LOTE students indicated higher response of agreement (35% males, 48% females) than the non-LOTE students (23% males, 21% females).

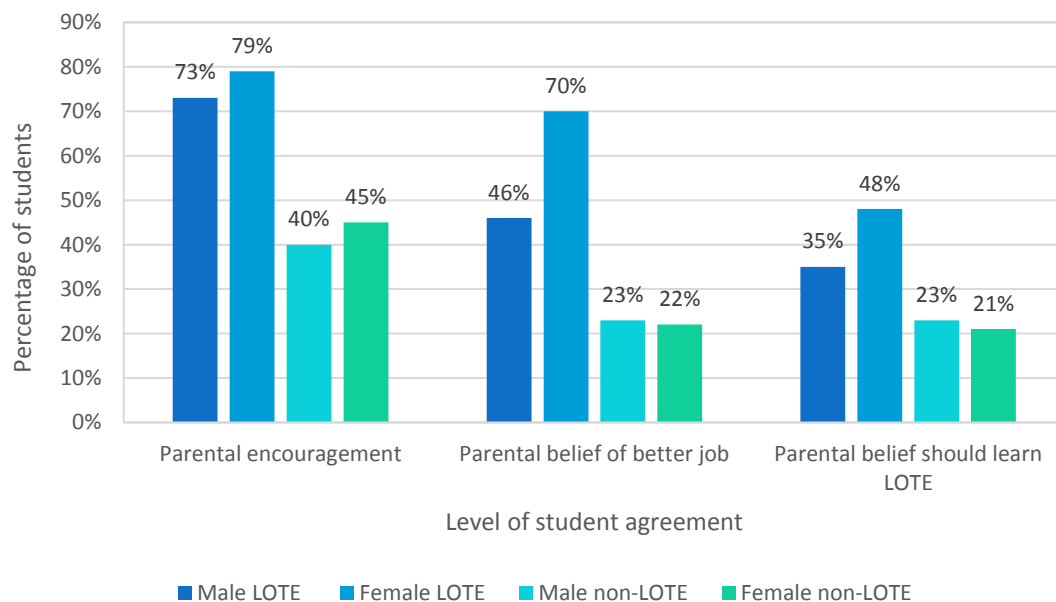


Figure 4.17: Basket 7 - Parental influence on LOTE and non-LOTE students

#### 4.2.3.10 Basket 8: Gender stereotype

- LOTE is a girls' area of study.
- Girls are more interested than boys in studying a LOTE.
- Girls are more interested than boys in studying mathematics.

The first statement had the strongest disagreement response, with 93% of students disagreeing that LOTE is a girls' area of study. 79% of students disagreed with the second statement, while 88% disagreed with the third. Males and females were remarkably close in their responses, with the first and third questions identical (94% for both genders for item one, 88% for item two) while there was only one percent difference in the second item (males 77%, females 78%). See Figure 4.18 for an overall demonstration of student disagreement. The third question was included as a comparison to the second question in terms of whether certain subjects are considered to be more suited to males or females.

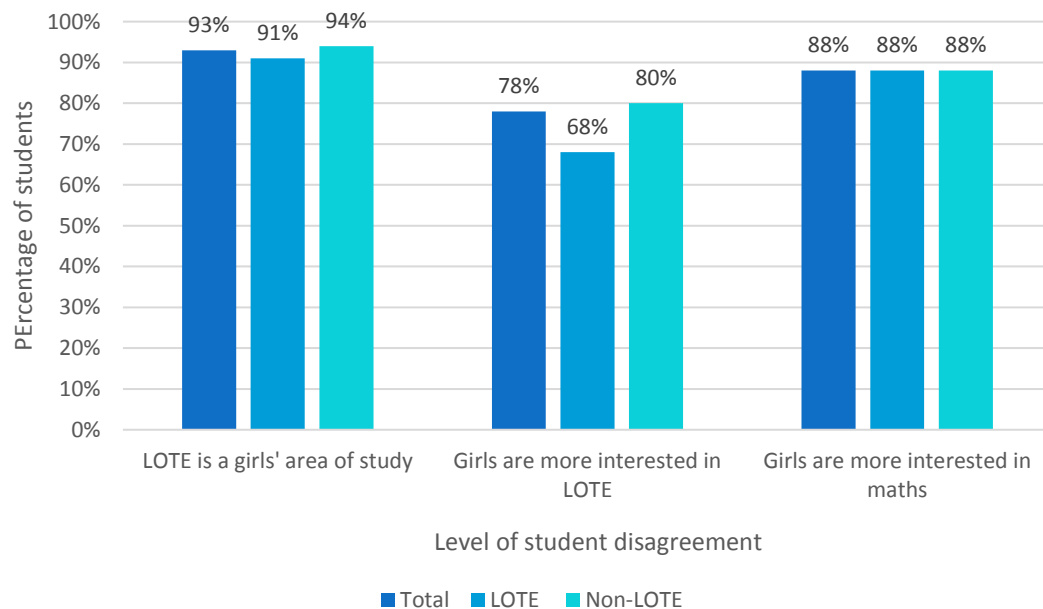


Figure 4.18: Level of student disagreement that LOTE is a gendered subject



#### 4.2.3.11 Basket 9: Ideal L2 Self

- The things I want to do in the future involve learning a LOTE.
- I can imagine myself as someone who is able to speak a LOTE.
- I want to be the kind of person that speaks a LOTE well.
- I see myself one day speaking a LOTE with native speakers around the world.
- If I achieve my dreams, I will use a LOTE effectively in the future.

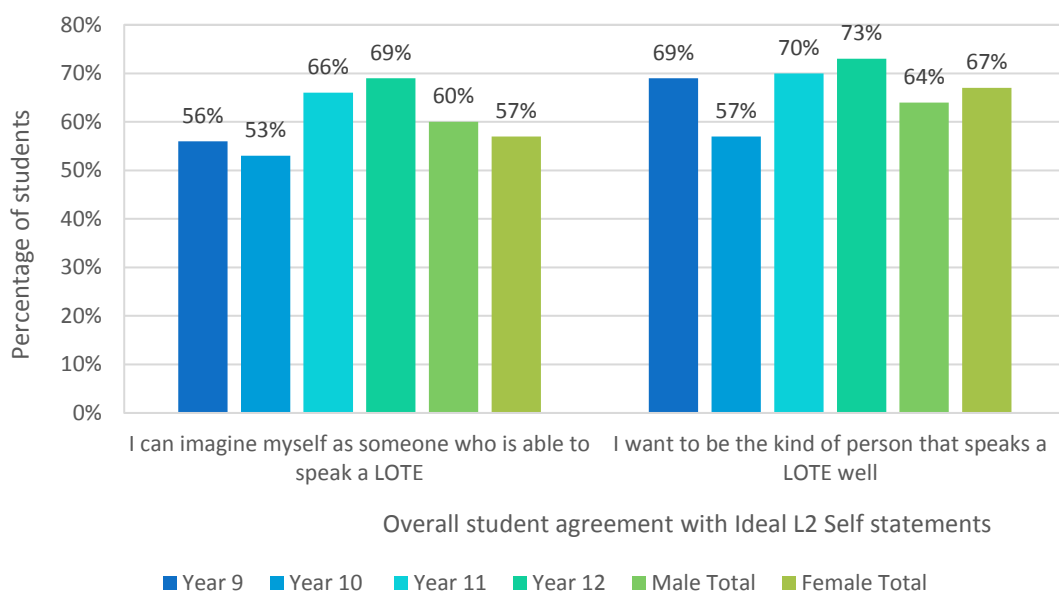
There were very high response rates from LOTE students in terms of agreement for each statement regarding the Ideal L2 Self (see Figure 4.19). Just over half of the non-LOTE students also agreed with two of the statements, disagreeing with the other three. The statement that received the highest agreement score for both the LOTE and non-LOTE students was ‘I want to be the kind of person that speaks a LOTE well’.

		Elective LOTE	
		Yes	No
The things I want to do in the future involve learning a LOTE.	Disagree	37%	71%
	Agree	63%	29%
I can imagine myself as someone who is able to speak a LOTE.	Disagree	14%	48%
	Agree	86%	52%
I want to be the kind of person that speaks a LOTE well.	Disagree	8%	43%
	Agree	92%	57%
I see myself one day speaking a LOTE with native speakers around the world.	Disagree	29%	70%
	Agree	71%	30%
If I achieve my dreams, I will use a LOTE effectively in the future.	Disagree	27%	71%
	Agree	73%	29%

*Figure 4.19: Likert scale responses of LOTE and non LOTE students for the Ideal L2 Self statements*

A total of 92% (91% male, 93% female) LOTE students and 57% (55% male, 61% female) non-LOTE students responded with some level of agreement. This indicates that even students who are not studying a LOTE would like to be able to speak a

LOTE well which suggests there is some value of LOTE learning, however this statistic may be the students who wish to be able to study an elective LOTE but are not enrolled in one. This is the same for the next statement, ‘I can imagine myself as someone who is able to speak a LOTE’ which directly suggest an Ideal L2 Self, and was agreed with by 86% (85% male, 88% female) LOTE students and 52% (53% male, 49% female) non-LOTE students. Figure 4.20 depicts the agreement levels with these statements in regards to student Year level and gender, with both LOTE and non-LOTE scores combined. 71% of LOTE and 30% of non-LOTE students saw themselves speaking a LOTE with native speakers around the world, while 73% LOTE and 29% non-LOTE students agreed that if they achieved their dreams they would use a LOTE effectively in the future. The statement ‘the things I want to do in the future involve learning a LOTE’ scored the lowest with 63% (66% male, 65% female) of LOTE students indicating their agreement. In comparison, 29% of non-LOTE students agreed with this statement.



*Figure 4.20:* Overall student agreement with Ideal L2 Self statements according to Year level and gender

#### 4.2.3.12 *Basket 10: Ought-to L2 Self*

- Learning a LOTE is necessary because people surrounding me expect me to.
- If I fail to study a LOTE I will be letting other people down.
- I believe that learning a LOTE is important because the people that I respect think that I should.
- Studying a LOTE is important to me because an educated person is supposed to be able to speak a second language.
- I feel that I should keep studying a LOTE because I have already spent years learning it.

Both LOTE and non-LOTE students disagreed with each of these statements regarding an Ought-to L2 Self, except for the LOTE students who agreed with the final statement. A total of 74% (77% male, 76% female) of students who were enrolled in an elective LOTE indicated their agreement with the statement ‘I feel that I should keep studying a LOTE because I have already spent years learning it’. This was somewhat surprising considering that agreement response scores continued to decline from the fourth statement to the first (39%, 26%, 24%, 13% respectively). For the non-LOTE students this was also the case, with statement one receiving an agreement score of nine percent, statement two 12%, statements three and four 17%, and statement five 24%. Like the LOTE students, the non-LOTE students (26% male, 21% female) reported the highest levels of agreement with the last statement concerning the feeling of obligation to continue study due to previous efforts learning the LOTE. Overall, students did not exhibit strong ought-to L2 selves and thus do not appear to be influenced by these selves when choosing whether or not to continue their second language study (see Figure 4.21).

		Elective LOTE	
		Yes	No
Learning a LOTE is necessary because people surrounding me expect me to.	Disagree	87%	91%
	Agree	13%	9%
If I fail to study a LOTE I will be letting other people down.	Disagree	76%	88%
	Agree	24%	12%
I believe that learning a LOTE is important because the people that I respect think that I should.	Disagree	74%	83%
	Agree	26%	17%
Studying a LOTE is important to me because an educated person is supposed to be able to speak an L2.	Disagree	61%	83%
	Agree	39%	17%
I feel that I should keep studying a LOTE because I have already spent years learning it.	Disagree	26%	76%
	Agree	74%	24%

*Figure 4.21:* Likert scale responses of LOTE and non LOTE students for the Ought-to L2 Self statements

Section two has presented the results for students' attitudes to LOTE categorised by the subscales of items. The next two sections report on the non-LOTE and LOTE student sections of the survey.

#### 4.2.3.13 Section 3: Non-LOTE Students

The non-LOTE experiences subscale consisted of 12 items ( $\alpha = .85$ ) and the non-LOTE reasons subscale consisted of 17 items ( $\alpha = .93$ ) which were both found to be highly reliably. Table 4.6 reports the means, standard deviations and correlation of the two subscales.

*Table 4.6:* Means, standard deviations and correlations for non-LOTE students' experiences and reasons for discontinuation

Variables	1	2
Non-LOTE students' experiences		
Non-LOTE students' reasons	-.54***	
<i>M</i>	3.51	3.45
<i>SD</i>	.92	1.08

\*\*\* $p < .001$ .

#### 4.2.3.14 Section 4: LOTE Students

Cronbach's alphas for the 12 LOTE experiences and 17 LOTE reasons items were .82 and .80 respectively. Table 4.7 reports the means, standard deviations and correlation of the two subscales.

*Table 4.7: Means, standard deviations and correlations for LOTE students' experiences and reasons for continuation*

Variables	1	2
LOTE students' experiences		
LOTE students' reasons	.71***	
<i>M</i>	4.31	4.50
<i>SD</i>	.60	.60

\*\*\* $p < .001$ .

#### 4.2.3.15 Hierarchical Linear Regressions

Three hierarchical linear regressions were used to test the relationship between variables in the study. This type of analysis is used to determine the net effects of multiple independent variables on a dependent variable. The three dependent variables tested were the relative importance of LOTE, the Ideal L2 Self and the Ought-to L2 Self (see Table 4.8 for all regressions). Hierarchical linear regression analysis was used to test if demographic factors (Year level, first language [L1], gender, and grandparents' L1), attitude to school and parental influence significantly predicted students' ratings of the relative importance of LOTE (see Table 1). The overall regression predicting students' relative importance of LOTE was significant, accounting for 37% of the variance ( $R^2 = .37$ ,  $F(6, 367) = 36.60$ ,  $p < .001$ ). There were no significant effects of demographic factors on the relative importance of LOTE. After the demographic factors were controlled for, there was a significant main effect of attitude to school on the relative importance of LOTE ( $\beta = .08$ ,  $t = 1.96$ ,

$p < .05$ ). It was found that parental influence was significantly and positively associated with the relative importance of LOTE ( $\beta = .58, t = 13.24, p < .001$ ).

The second regression tested if the same demographic factors, attitude to school, LOTE effort outside school, and parental influence significantly influenced students' ratings of the Ideal L2 Self. The overall regression predicting students' Ideal L2 selves was significant ( $F(7, 364) = 66.83, p < .001$ ), accounting for 56% of the variance. Again, there was no significant effect of demographic factors on students' Ideal L2 Selves. After the demographic factors were controlled for, there were significant main effects of attitude to school ( $\beta = .10, t = 2.70, p < .01$ ) and LOTE effort outside of school on the Ideal L2 Self ( $\beta = .48, t = 10.60, p < .001$ ). It was found from this hierarchical linear regression test that parental influence was significantly and positively associated with the Ideal L2 Self ( $\beta = .31, t = 6.75, p < .001$ ).

The third hierarchical linear regression was used to test the same demographic factors, attitude to school, LOTE effort outside school, and parental influence significantly predicted students' ratings of the Ought-to L2 Self. The overall regression predicting students' Ought-to L2 selves was significant ( $F(7, 366) = 87.36, p < .001$ ), accounting for 63% of the variance. Again, there was no significant effect of demographic factors on students' Ought-to L2 Selves. After the demographic factors were controlled for, there were significant main effects of attitude to school ( $\beta = -.13, t = 3.84, p < .001$ ) and LOTE effort outside of school on the Ought-to L2 Self ( $\beta = .43, t = 10.34, p < .001$ ). It was found from this hierarchical linear regression test that parental influence was significantly and positively associated with the Ought-to L2 Self ( $\beta = .44, t = 10.35, p < .001$ ).

*Table 4.8:* Hierarchical linear regressions examining the effects of demographic factors, attitude to school, LOTE effort outside school and parental influence on the relative importance of LOTE, Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self

Variable	Relative Importance of LOTE	Ideal L2 Self	Ought to L2 Self
<i>Step 1</i>			
Year level	.07	.05	-.09
Gender	.05	.02	-.00
First language (L1)	.23	.05	.05
Grandparents' L1	-.02	-.02	-.00
<i>Step 2</i>			
Attitude to school	.08*	.10**	-.13***
LOTE effort outside school		.48***	.43***
<i>Step 3</i>			
Parental influence	.58***	.31***	.44***
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.37	.56	.63
<i>F</i>	36.60***	66.83***	87.36***

*Note.* Standardized regression coefficients are presented. All coefficients were taken from the last step of the equation.

\**p* < .05. \*\**p* < .01. \*\*\**p* < .001.

### 4.3 Qualitative

Qualitative data were gathered to provide a deeper understanding of the phenomena of elective second language learning, and students' motivations and circumstances surrounding their enrolment decision. O'Leary (2010) described the importance of ongoing rich engagement with raw data, and states that "qualitative data demands cycles of iterative analysis" (p. 262). The remainder of this chapter describes this cyclical analysis process and reports the findings from the focus group interviews. Data is organised within Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS),

with data first presented in the Ideal L2 Self dimension, followed by the Ought-to L2 Self and L2 Learning experiences.

### **4.3.1 Characteristics of focus group participants**

As described in the previous chapter (see Section 4.7.2 for further detail), five classifications were used to categorise students according to their commitment to L2 study and their enrolment status at the time of data collection:

- Continuing Students: students who want to learn a second language and are thus enrolled in an elective second language subject at school.
- Forced Discontinuing Students: students who want to be learning a second language at school however they are not enrolled in an elective L2 subject.
- Undecided Students: students who are currently enrolled in an elective L2 subject but are thinking of discontinuing their study the following year.
- New Discontinuing Students: students who have previously been enrolled in an elective second language subject at school but are not currently enrolled in one.
- Discontinuing Students: students who are not enrolled nor have ever been enrolled in an elective second language subject and do not want to learn an L2 at school.

Within the L2MSS dimensions, data extracts are classified to assist the presentation of the story of Tasmanian students' motivations for elective L2 enrolment. The use of the classification system develops a deeper understanding of



the issue being explored. Table 4.9 illustrates the profiles of the focus group participants in terms of their Year level, gender and classification category.

### **4.3.2 Thematic analysis of the data**

A thematic analysis was undertaken to categorise the qualitative data in an attempt to understand the phenomenon of students' elective L2 choice motivation. Braun and Clarke (2006) described thematic analysis as a widely used method which “minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail” (p. 79). This method of analysis was clearly defined process which progressed through Braun and Clarke's (2006) suggested stages (see Section 3.4.2.5 for a detailed account of the analysis process). The software program NVivo was utilised as an online data management tool for the analysis of the qualitative data. The qualitative data are presented within the L2MSS framework.

### **4.3.3 Ideal L2 Self**

The Ideal L2 Self is the first dimension of Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS) and refers to the future ideal self that students wish to be in terms of their second language abilities. The Ideal Self acts as a future guide for students as they aim to reduce the gap between their current and possible future self (Dörnyei, 2005). When undertaking the thematic analysis, data were organised within this theme if they regarded: future visions as proficient language learners; intrinsic motivation for L2 study; and genuine interest in languages for non-material gains. In accordance with this overarching theme, the following themes were the final versions after the thematic analysis was complete: future orientations; communication; travel; and interest (see Figure 4.22). Data is presented in order of each of these themes.

*Table 4.9: Focus group participant profiles of Year level, gender and classification category*

Yr	Continuing Students		Forced Discontinuing Students		Undecided Students		New Discontinuing Students	Discontinuing Students	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	M	F
9	Ben	Crystal	Henry	Megan	Alex			Mike	
	Dean		Aaron						
	Darcy		Caleb						
	Vincent		Jace						
10	Ian	Bec	Kurt	Alysha	Mitch	Amanda	Jordan	Oliver	Jacinta
		Chelsea		Ally	Andrew			Rob	Hayley
		Ella		Kimberley					Kate
11					Peter		Tristan		
					Brendan				
12	Josh	Lucy	Patrick						
	George								

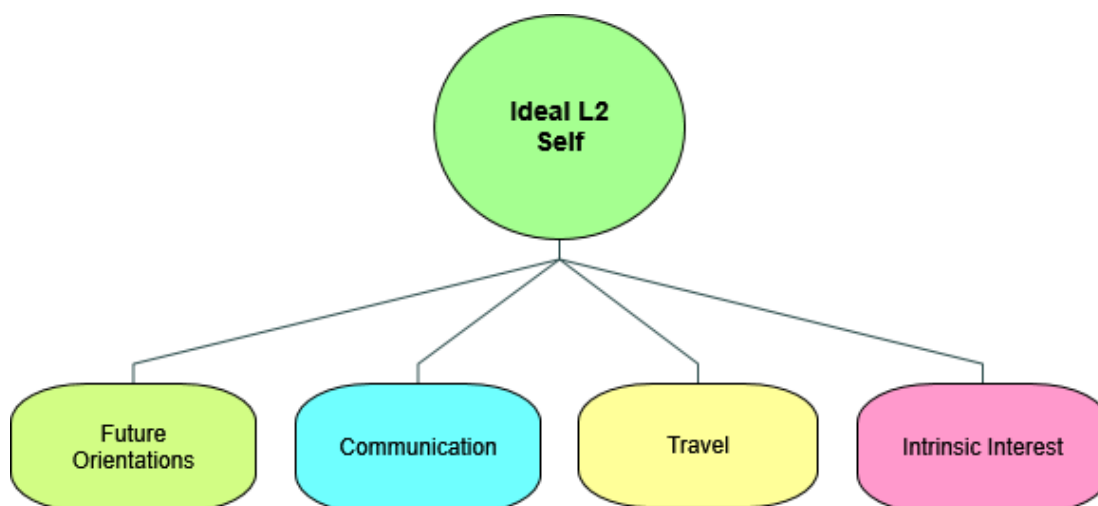


Figure 4.22: Final Ideal L2 Self theme mind map

#### 4.3.3.1 Future orientations

This theme contains references to students' future plans and ideals, such as study and careers, which are the two sub-themes within the theme of future orientations. Future L2 study contains data pertaining to both possible and planned study, and similarly students' possible or planned careers are discussed in terms of benefitting from second language knowledge.

##### 4.3.3.1.1 Future L2 study

Some students were considering future L2 study in an optimistic manner, hoping that they would be able to undertake future learning either at school or independently.

Alysha and Ally, Forced Discontinuing Students, and Penny, classified as a Discontinuing Student, were considering studying an elective L2 at college:

Alysha: Well I pretty much have my classes set for grade 11 but I'm actually considering studying French in grade 12.

Ally: Yeah I'm definitely now thinking about doing French at college because that is something that I've sort of had a personal interest in for so long.

Penny: Whatever language I do learn, I'll probably travel there. So I don't know what one it is, maybe French or something.

Jace: Yeah when I finish school I'll try and pick up a bit, every now and then I take a look and like see if I can pick up a few more words in the language.

Josh, a Continuing Student, knew he would not be able to study an elective L2 within his university degree, and was therefore hoping to continue it independently “I mean, I'd like to think I can try and keep learning it outside of school, but I'm not really sure if that will end up happening. I mean I'd like to hope so, but- yeah...”. Aaron, a Forced Discontinuing Student, did not appear to have a preference for how or where he learnt his desired L2, stating “if I was given a clear opportunity to learn Japanese then I probably would take that up”.

Two Continuing Students were definite on their plans to enrol in elective languages in the future, which for Ian, was purely based on interest, compared to Ella who regarded it as an essential subject for her career path:

Ian: Yeah and I'm planning to do it next year and also in year 12 but just [because] I find it interesting and I enjoy it.

Ella: next year I wanted to do every language but there aren't enough lines. I'm actually planning on doing Latin next year because it's one of the extra courses they give. I'll be doing level two [Japanese] again just

for a refresh year to help me continue, and then I'll definitely be doing level three and then going on to uni hopefully.

It is interesting to note that most of the students highlighted in this theme are all classified as Continuing Students or Forced Discontinuing Students, with the two students still at secondary school the next year both having definite plans to continue their L2 study. Penny, classified as a Discontinuing Student, was considering learning an L2 at college next year, although her plans were very vague at the time of the interview. Another Discontinuing Student, Hayley, spoke of wanting to learn her grandfather's language and perhaps using an 'app' (application on smartphone or tablet) to do so. Neither of the two New Discontinuing Students in the study discussed future L2 learning. All of the Forced Discontinuing Students presented in this theme were hoping to be able to recommence their L2 learning. Ella's chosen career clearly required L2 learning, however other students also believed that it would be beneficial for their future careers.

#### *4.3.3.1.2 Future career benefit*

Both students with and without careers in specific language areas envisioned benefitting from their second language knowledge. Kurt, a Forced Discontinuing Student, and Bec, Lucy and Ella, who were Continuing Students, all had prospective employment which required a second language, and this created a strong Ideal L2 Self as they knew they would be using a language in their work environments. Kurt had aspirations to work overseas through 'Gol Brazil', an international futsal training program, preferably as a coach but possibly as a tour guide. He explained "I'm very passionate about futsal, so being able to do that and work at the same time it really appeals to me". Bec, who had plans to enter into International relations, stated "I

chose French because it's the language of diplomacy". Ella and Lucy clearly explained their future careers:

Ella: Yeah because languages are my passion, and I want to be a language teacher when I'm older, so it's kind of my goal to learn as many of the six thousand five hundred languages there are in the world.

Lucy: I applied for the Bachelor of Arts Master of Nursing at Sydney and I want to do medicines from the frontier, Doctors Without Borders... there's five languages and you need to have at least two of them, fluent... I have English and French, and I'm going to pick up Spanish next year. Yeah, so hopefully that will... I hope that will work. Otherwise I'll look at like the World Health Organization or something. Foreign affairs or international relations.

Paul, also a Continuing Student, believed that he would work overseas and thus benefit from knowing a second language:

Well yeah, because I plan on like when I'm fresh out of university, I'll probably go to a different country like France or United Arab Emirates, something like that where I can get a job, get experience and also experience the country and the culture, and then come back and then settle down and speak English in Australia or New Zealand, something like that, so I think I'm going to definitely use languages in my future career.

When asked if he had envisioned a future career benefit when he first began second language learning, Darcy, another Continuing Student, stated "when I started, not

really, but I've realised that it will be good to learn a language and keep going with it", whereas Ella had a strong perception of the career benefits of second language learning in general: "With languages behind you, you can be hired for everything. So languages are a just brilliant thing to do with school I think". Again, students who perceived a future career benefit were all from the Continuing Students and Forced Discontinuing Students categories, except for Alex, an Undecided Student, who thought he may work overseas and thus use his language learning.

'Future orientations' is a practical theme in terms of language usage, as is the next theme 'communication', which presents students' visions of being able to communicate using their L2 skills.

#### *4.3.3.2 Communication*

The desire to communicate with L1 speakers is a strong component of an Ideal L2 Self, as students are able to envision themselves interacting with native speakers and using their L2 language skills efficiently enough to carry a conversation. Students in all categories except the New Discontinuing Students spoke in some way of communication in terms of an Ideal L2 Self, with Amanda, classified as an Undecided Student, stating that she thought "it would be good skill to have, just to be able to speak to people who can't speak English". Darcy, a Continuing Student, and Kurt, a Forced Discontinuing Student, both spoke of being able to understand more in a conversation as a benefit of using the other participant's first language:

Darcy: I feel it's really important to start going and learning a second language so you can have a more deep and meaningful conversation with people.

Kurt: I've done a fair bit of travelling, later and as you get to know the people that you're with they may only speak a little bit of English, but the relationship that you build it makes you want to be able to speak and understand more of what they're saying, so then vocabulary isn't restricted in that way.

Caleb and Ella, a Forced Discontinuing Student and Continuing Student respectively, provided examples of who they envisioned speaking to using their second language skills, Caleb for a team mate and Ella for her grandmother's family:

Caleb: Well I thought it would be a good thing to have so, because I play a few sports and in one of my teams I have someone who is French and he is not really fluent in English so I'd kind of like to speak another language to communicate with him better.

Ella: I find it really interesting to try to learn so I can talk with them in their language instead of them having to learn English.

Both Forced Discontinuing Students and Continuing Students made reference to their desires to be fluent in an L2, suggesting strong Ideal L2 selves:

Alysha: It's like a whole other world, you just can understand everything else in a completely different language, there is like no barriers, I don't know it just kind of intrigues me, it's like oh I can do this kind of thing.

Josh: I wish I could be fluent, though. I wish I was a little more dedicated to it.



Ella: I can see myself being fluent yeah because I do work really hard at it and it's kind of been my dream since I was really little.

A number of students referred to knowing or learning a second language as 'cool', which in this context was a slang term for describing it in a positive way (e.g. it would be good to learn an L2), as opposed to gaining social status. Lucy, a Continuing Student, explained "I wanted to learn French, and I thought the idea of being fluent was something that was really cool and you wouldn't get anywhere else". Peter, an Undecided Student, and Oliver and Penny, both Discontinuing Students, all believed that they thought it would be 'cool' to learn or be able to speak another language. Josh, a Continuing Student, used another slang term which can be interpreted the same way as 'cool' in this context when he commented that "knowing another language, it's sick".

Communication was a prevalent theme discussed in all focus groups and by students classified in four of the five profile categories. The next theme was even more prevalent, as past and previous travel was discussed by students from every category.

#### 4.3.3.3 *Travel*

Travel was one of the most prevalent themes of the study, including data from all focus groups and appearing in all student profile categories. It is another strong indicator of having an Ideal L2 Self, with most students who spoke of travel envisioning themselves using a second language to some degree in that country. Future travel plans were thus a motivating factor to enrol in an elective L2, or were part of the desire to want to study a second language in the future (e.g. for Forced Discontinuing Students or Discontinuing Students). Three students, Ella, a Continuing

Student, Ally, a Forced Discontinuing Student, and Peter, an Undecided Student, already knew the places to which they would like to travel:

Ella: I really want to go to China as well as Japan. I want to go everywhere, but the big three are Japan, China, and Russia.

Ally: I've always wanted to go to France so I really want to learn French.

Peter: Go to, like, France and be able to speak the language.

Henry, a Forced Discontinuing Student, also wanted to go to France, and thought that he would go “probably after college, like in that break that’s before uni”. Jordan, who was a New Discontinuing Student, and Penny, who was classified as a Discontinuing Student, had general travel plans:

Jordan: I’m interested in doing travel and being able to get around places where potentially English isn't going to suffice.

Penny: It would be cool to learn another language and then go to that country.

George, another Continuing Student, spoke of hopefully going on an exchange trip to Germany during future schooling, while Ben, also a Continuing Student, reflected that his family travelled “quite a bit” and that usually inspired him to want to learn L2s.

While travel was a popular motivating factor, the final theme categorised under the Ideal L2 Self dimension is the intrinsic interest that students had for second languages, and this theme was also of high prevalence as it was discussed across most of the student profile categories.

#### 4.3.3.4 *Interest*

This theme includes data referring explicitly to an interest in language or culture, or languages described as ‘appealing’ or liking the sound of them. This theme sits within the Ideal L2 Self dimension due to the intrinsic nature of students’ interest, and the way they were describing it, sometimes as ‘inexplicable’. This was demonstrated well by Aaron, a Forced Discontinuing Student, who explained:

You just have this not necessarily logical dream, just to be able to speak the language fluently and go into the country, be able speak it with the native people. Just for no other reason for it than that it appeals to you, that it's fun.

Students who expressed an intrinsic interest in languages did so in terms of stating their interest in languages or cultures in general, or in regards to a specific language or culture. Darcy, a Continuing Student, and Mitch, an Undecided Student, shared their interest in Japanese culture:

Darcy: I’ve just gotten to really like Japanese culture and it’s really interested me.

Mitch: It was really interesting just the whole Japanese culture and Japanese history it’s just really interesting to me.

Aaron, a Forced Discontinuing Student, was also interested in Japanese, but his interest was in the language itself: “the real language that I've always had a passion for and there's always love is Japanese”. Also Forced Discontinuing Students, the extracts from Henry and Megan demonstrate the scope of interest that students have for languages, as Henry was intrinsically interested in French due to the country, their

language and the accent, whereas Megan was interested overall in the differences in language and culture in other places compared to Australia:

Henry: I just like the place. I just like the place and how the language goes. Their accent, I really like their accent. I just like everything.

Megan: I don't know. I just like different cultures and stuff... Yeah, I don't know. I'm just interested.

Jordan, a New Discontinuing Student, explained that “even though I'm not doing it anymore I am interested in learning language”, which possibly suggests that despite his classification as a student who discontinued his elective L2 subject this year, he may be interested in future L2 study.

Students spoke of a language being more appealing when learning more than one, as well as developing an interest from being in a language class, and this is demonstrated by extracts from Kimberley and Andrew, a Continuing Student and Undecided Student respectively:

Kimberley: it didn't appeal to me as much as Chinese did.

Andrew: I got introduced to French and Chinese. Neither of which I particularly enjoyed. But in year 8 I chose Chinese and I got into that a little bit. Year 9, Chinese as well. I've been doing Chinese up until this year [10], so I'm still doing Chinese... I did start enjoying it, really.

Andrew's comment demonstrates the importance of students' engagement and enjoyment in regards to their lessons, which can develop an initial interest or further their existing interest in the subject. This can relate directly to the teacher, which is a sub theme presented later in the chapter.

These four themes have depicted how factors relating to the Ideal L2 Self inform students' motivations for second language learning, and the following data is classified under the second dimension of the L2MSS, the Ought-to Self, thus signalling a move from intrinsic to extrinsic influences.

#### **4.3.4 Ought to L2 Self**

The Ought-to L2 Self is the second component of Dörnyei's (2005) L2MSS and is based on the future self-guide of who the student feels they ought to be, to meet expectations or avoid negative outcomes. Students are still motivated by the desire to lessen the gap between their current and future self, but this is based on external pressures rather than internal desires.

Only two students in the focus groups demonstrated an Ought-to Self when speaking of their second language learning. Patrick, who was classified as a Forced Discontinuing Student as he had been unable to go any further with his Chinese study after studying at the highest level in Year 11, spoke of his desire to continue learning Chinese, as "I wouldn't want to drop it now... it would be a shame", which highlights part of his motivation stemmed from the feeling that he ought to continue after so many years spent learning it. The second student, George, in the Continuing Student category, explained that he wanted to study university level German in Year 12 through the High Achiever Program (HAP), so he enrolled in "Year 11 German but I was always fluent so that was really... I was doing the subject so I could do the high achiever program in year 12". Despite already being fluent, George needed Year 11 German as a prerequisite for the HAP.

The extract from George, which refers to studying an L2 as part of an Ought-to Self due to the subject being a prerequisite, demonstrates an institutional demand,

which is a theme discussed in the next part of the chapter when the final component of Dörnyei's system, L2 Learning Experiences, is presented, having now explored data pertaining to the Ideal and Ought to Selves.

#### **4.3.5 L2 Learning Experiences**

The L2 Learning Experiences is the last dimension of Dörnyei's (2005) L2MSS, and is related to the learners' experiences and immediate learning environment. This includes factors such as influences from teachers, peers and family, achievement, lesson content and curriculum, and enjoyment. This differs from the previous two components of self-guides, where these experiences affect students' motivation to study an L2. Dörnyei (2005) explained that initial motivations come from successful engagement with the L2 learning in a bottoms-up process, from which the self-image can then be developed, however the data from this study demonstrates that disengagement with L2 learning also occurs when students have negative experiences, and therefore they do not choose to study elective L2s. Thus, since the present study involved participants who were and were not enrolled in elective L2 subjects, this theme includes students' negative experiences and demotivation, which were classified under this theme in the data analysis as they relate directly to students' L2 learning experiences.

There are six main themes in this component: institutional barriers; historical orientation; priority; external influences; L2 background; and subject perception. These are the final themes upon the completion of the thematic analysis, and involved the most recoding throughout the cyclical process of analyses. Thus, some themes contain sub themes to assist the organisation of the data, and the logical presentation

of students' experiences (see Figure 4.24 for the mind map of the L2 Learning Experiences theme).

#### *4.3.5.1 Institutional Barriers*

The first of the six main themes, this theme contains data relevant to the barriers that students reported experiencing with their L2 learning which related directly to structural institutional decisions, such as timetabling and the availability of elective L2s. This theme encompasses the sub themes 'language choice', 'timetable constraints' and 'lack of enrolments' which emerged as the most prevalent sub themes during the fourth phase of the thematic analysis, when the recoding and renaming of themes was occurring. Data is presented in the order of the three sub themes.

##### *4.3.5.1.1 Language choice*

This sub theme was created when two themes were collapsed into one, as it was determined that the data extracts in 'range of L2s' and 'desired L2 not offered' were very similar, and could thus be collated to form the new theme of 'language choice' as an institutional barrier. This was an interesting theme because a number of students in the focus groups, regardless of their profile classification, expressed the desire for their school to offer a wider range of elective second languages, and cited this as a reason that they or their peers were not enrolled in an elective L2. When discussing not currently being enrolled in an elective L2 at school, Jace, a Forced Discontinuing Student, explained that he probably would have liked to if there was a wider variety of languages: "I wanted to learn Italian, and um yeah the school didn't have Italian". A number of students expressed the thought that having a range of elective L2s would encourage their peers to enrol in one, with Kimberley, also a Forced Discontinuing Student, suggesting "if there was more variety of languages too instead of just

Indonesian and Japanese being the only ones that you can pick out of, cos there's probably a lot more variety of what you want to learn than those two". Comments were expressed in a similar vein by students who were enrolled in an elective L2, Paul, a Continuing Student, and Alex, an Undecided Student, as demonstrated by the following extracts:

Paul: Personally I'd rather do a different language. I'd rather do something like Mandarin or French.

Alex: I would have rather done a different language though.

It is interesting that for Paul and Alex, despite their preference for another language, their interest in second language learning was strong enough for them to settle on enrolling in the elective language subject that was offered at their school. The selection of electives leads to the following theme within 'Institutional Barriers' which is 'timetable constraints', as students are restricted in their electives due to institutional timetabling decisions.

#### *4.3.5.1.2 Timetable constraints*

The theme 'timetable constraints' was created from the combination of the codes 'number of electives', 'timetable clash', and 'not enough room'. Data in this theme refers to the barriers that students faced in terms of their institutes' timetabling arrangements. Kimberley, Jace and Kurt were all Forced Discontinuing Students who cited space and the number of electives as barriers:



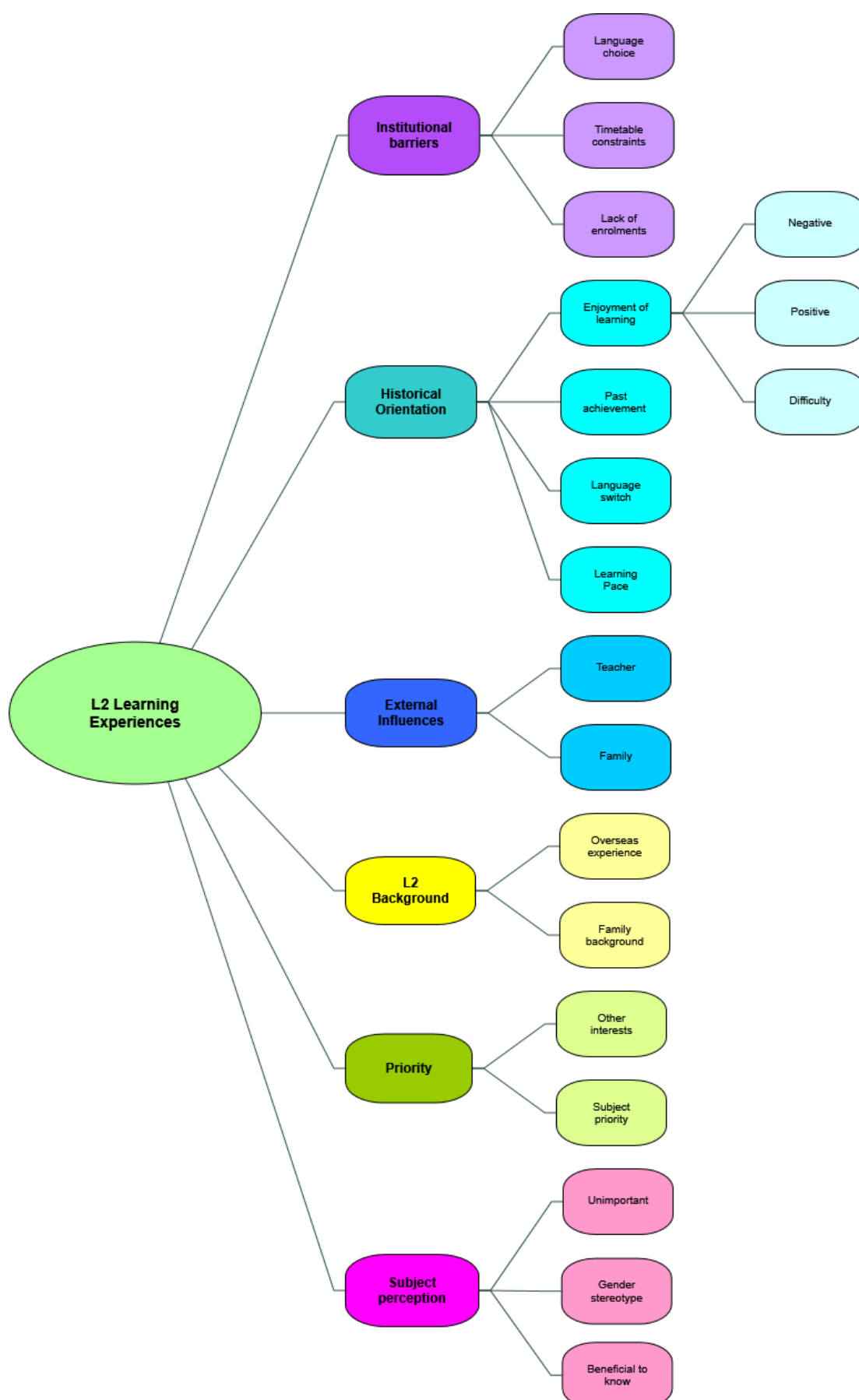


Figure 4.23: Final L2 Learning Experiences thematic mind map

Kimberley: like if I had my way and I could do like six different electives then I probably would have picked the language, but because there's such a limited space for things to do, I just picked whatever I wanted to do more.

Jace: yeah I liked doing Japanese...[but] I won't be doing it next year [Year 10] because of space and all that.

Kurt: Well I probably have to learn it outside of school time, because I don't really have many extra open lines in school to do it, so I'd probably have to take an online course or something like that.

Josh and Lucy were Continuing Students who also spoke of not having room for language study. Josh explained the need to have a year off from French study as “Year 11 I didn't have any room for French so I didn't do”, whereas Lucy had future concerns about there being no room for a language in her university degree, which would be a set course, and then having no time outside of school to study it independently:

If I ended up in med I wouldn't be able to continue it. I wouldn't have time, because I play sport and everything outside of school so there's just literally no time. Which would be a shame.

Ally and Jace, both Forced Discontinuing Students, understood that their future education at college would involve timetable constraints in terms of the number of subjects in which they could enrol:

Ally: I think it's also that there's not enough time and there's not enough lines. That [French] would be the first thing to go in my timetable.

Jace: In Year 11 and 12 if there is room I will, it all just depends, because I know I'm going to do maths methods as part of, as my maths subject, I'm going to do English, an English subject and an art subject, I'm pretty sure religion... or there is another subject that goes with it that is compulsory first year and then I'm not sure what I'm going to do for my fifth line so I might do a language if they offer what I want to do.

Patrick, again a Forced Discontinuing Student, explained that "I wanted to do French and Chinese in grade 9, but they didn't let me" due to both subjects being timetabled at the same time, which is a disappointing story to hear and highlights the desire of students to enrol in an elective L2 subject but timetabling barriers preventing them from doing so. Another preventative situation that students experience is the lack of enrolment numbers which can affect subjects or school trips being offered, and this barrier is explored next.

#### *4.3.5.1.3 Lack of enrolments*

The lack of student numbers in elective L2 classes was an issue raised in six of the seven focus groups. This is an interesting theme, as some students experienced the lack of enrolments in an elective L2 class as a barrier, while others were able to enrol but spoke of the issues they experienced by only having small class sizes. With only a minority of students choosing to enrol in an elective L2 subject, classes sometimes were not able to be offered, and this is described by Caleb, a Forced Discontinuing Student:

I know there are a few people who wanted to do Japanese but I'm not sure there are enough people for a class to do Japanese, but there was at least one Indonesian class.

Peter, an Undecided Student, stated “no one seems to do it very much at [my school]” when considering the lack of enrolments, while Ben, a Continuing Student, spoke of the lack of enrolments affecting activities such as school trips:

There's a China trip on next year. I think it might not run since ... Well in our grade, I think only two people are doing Chinese next year.

Jordan explained that when he told his teacher he were not continuing next year, he “wasn't too happy when I told him I wasn't going on with French... Because the class is getting smaller and smaller.” Lucy and Josh, Continuing Students, and Tristan, a New Discontinuing Student, described that due to the lack of enrolments, they often had composite classes:

Lucy: Yeah we have level twos and level threes, so ... It's hard, but if we only had a level three class there'd only be like four of us in there. So it's hard.

Josh: You kind of have to have a mixed class.

Tristan: In my instance, when I was in year 9, we had to combine it with the grade above because we didn't have enough people.

Composite classes became a teaching issue at times, with the language teacher having to move between two levels, which is highlighted by Ella, a Continuing Student, who explained:

The teacher spends more time focusing on the level three's because they have their exams and everything, but it's kind of hard for the level two's if you're me at least, it's kind of hard to stay focused on what are we meant to be doing: "I don't understand this certain sentence, you [the teacher] can't come and help because you're too busy with them".

While students understood the need for composite classes, there were differing views on the experience. Both Continuing Students, Lucy spoke of enjoying being in a small class, as opposed to Ella, who wished there were more peers to work with and ask for help.

This theme has demonstrated the prevalent issues students experience in terms of institutional barriers which are outside of their control. It is clear that some students have been able to overcome these barriers and study an elective L2 subject, while for others, the barriers were simply too great and did not allow their enrolment. The next theme explores students' previous experiences and how this has affected their decision whether to enrol or not in an elective second language class.

#### *4.3.5.2 Historical Orientation*

This theme captures the past experiences which have affected students' motivation regarding enrolment in elective L2s. An outline of their experiences is presented via the four sub themes 'enjoyment of learning', 'past achievement', 'language switch' and 'learning pace'. These sub themes were the most prevalent within this theme, and demonstrate the importance of past experiences impacting students' motivation to study a second language. Both positive and negative experiences are included in this theme, describing why students were either motivated to continue or discontinue their L2 studies, and these are presented in the following data extracts.

#### *4.3.5.2.1 Enjoyment of learning*

Enjoyment is an essential component of any learning being undertaken, and this is especially important when students consider whether or not to continue with a certain element of learning. In this case of course it is second language learning, and this theme consists of three sub themes within itself: 'positive', 'negative' and 'difficulty'. Whether or not they enjoyed their previous L2 learning is reduced to positive or negative experiences, but the sub theme 'difficulty' is also captured within this theme as how difficult the subject was directly affects students' enjoyment of learning. First students' positive experiences are explored, followed by their negative ones, and then their perceptions of the difficulty of languages study are presented.

##### *4.3.5.2.1.1 Positive*

Students described their enjoyment of learning in a variety of ways, including it being an interesting, enjoyable or fun class, or liking the subject. Andrew, Jace, Tristan and Kimberley, an Undecided Student, Forced Discontinuing Student, New Discontinuing Student and Continuing Student respectively, all described their positive experiences in different terms:

Andrew: I don't particularly have an interest in learning a second language. I just liked the subject of Chinese.

Jace: In primary school there was an optional Japanese subject and so I tried that out and I really liked it.

Tristan: I did in year 9 because I did enjoy it.

Kimberley: Everyone just loved it, they just really, they just, every time you went into the class you just really wanted to be there, I think that's

what made it, I don't know, enjoyable, just the enthusiasm from the teacher.

The term 'fun' was quite prevalent, with students employing the word to describe why they experienced a positive L2 learning situation, such as Patrick, a Forced Discontinuing Student, who explained "that was actually a fun year" in reference to the time he was able to simultaneously enrol in two elective L2 subjects. Other students who used this term included Mitch, an Undecided Student, Josh, a Continuing Student, and again Patrick:

Mitch: It's really a fun class.

Josh: Then this year I had the spare line. I could've done something like specialized or ... something just not fun, so I was like, maybe not. And I chose to do French again.

Patrick: I had a preference for Chinese because I found it a little bit more challenging and I thought that was a lot of fun.

Josh's comment is of most interest here, suggesting that even though he later describes French as his hardest and least prioritised subject, he gains enjoyment from learning it, and considers it a 'fun' subject. As demonstrated by the range of extracts, this theme was represented by all categories except the Discontinuing Students, who were understandably more prominent in the following theme of negative second language learning experiences.

#### 4.3.5.2.1.2 *Negative*

This theme contains data pertaining to second language learning described by students as a negative experience, often in terms of being boring, unappealing or uninteresting.

Students who explained outright that they simply disliked the subject were mostly from the Discontinuing Students category, such as Hayley, Penny and Kate, except in the case of Lucy, a Continuing Student:

Lucy: I had to do Japanese from Grade 3 to Grade 7 and I didn't like that.

Hayley: I didn't really like Indonesian.

Penny: I didn't really like it at all. I don't like sitting there for a long time, listening to someone talk in another language. I just didn't really enjoy it.

Kate: I guess when we learnt it in primary school we didn't have a choice and it was, a thing I really didn't like.

Other students who conveyed their dislike of the subject via other terms included Jacinta, a Forced Discontinuing Student, who explained that second languages were “just not something I really want to pursue” and Brendan, whose comment “I'm just not enjoying it anymore” signalled part of his Undecided Student status. Alysha, Caleb and Henry were all Forced Discontinuing Students who also described their negative experiences:

Alysha: Indonesian doesn't really appeal to me.

Caleb: Nah it was more just finding the class boring pretty much, like I liked the language part of it but you didn't do much in it.

Henry: I was losing interest in it, I guess. I just thought I don't really want to do this. I want to do something else.



Brendan and Henry are two examples of students who initially enjoyed their language learning but experienced a lessening of this as they continued. It is interesting to consider that the next theme describing L2 learning difficulty was not often discussed in term of negative learning experiences, instead simply being accepted as a matter of fact by students. Some Discontinuing Students spoke of their difficulty learning an L2, however this was coded under the theme ‘past achievement’ which is preceded by ‘difficulty’, the next theme to be presented.

#### 4.3.5.2.1.3 *Difficulty*

The theme ‘difficulty’ refers to students’ perceptions of how difficult second languages, and second language subjects, are, especially when considered in the context of school learning. This sub theme is within the overall theme of ‘Historical Orientations’ as these perceptions inform students’ decision of whether or not to continue with L2 study based on prior learning experiences. What is most interesting about this theme is that students who spoke of languages being difficult were often not deterred by that label, either enjoying the challenge of learning, as stated by Dean and Patrick, a Continuing Student and Forced Discontinuing Student respectively, or simply accepting that it was going to be their hardest subject. In terms of a challenge, Dean, a Continuing Student, stated “I thought it was hard, that’s why I did it” which was a view also held by Patrick, a Forced Discontinuing Student who found the challenge of Chinese to be fun. When asked the latter question, Josh replied “yeah. And I’m not doing the easiest subjects” with which Lucy, in the same focus group, concurred, adding “exactly, cos on top of our course, it’s like something that’s totally different. We’re both doing mostly science”. Both students had additional comments on the difficulty of elective languages along with Ally, a Forced Discontinuing Student, and Jordan, a New Discontinuing Student:

Lucy: I think I found it a lot harder, like very hard in Grade 11, so then I sort of lost interest. I was like, oh, I'm done with languages. It's harder than most other subjects as well.

Josh: Plus the French exam is like the longest one because you have all the different sections.

Ally: I'm a little bit scared it's going to be really hard and I just won't be able to do it.

Jordan: It is a difficult subject.

A Continuing Student himself, Dean believed that students who were not enrolled in an elective L2 were perturbed by students who were and the perception of difficulty that they (sometimes inadvertently) projected:

Even some of the people in languages, I feel that like they've kind of given up because it's so hard to keep these words and phrases in your head all the time, I think it just builds to frustration. I think some of, um, fears have just translated into people who don't do languages, it's like "oh I don't want to do that it's too hard". Because these people who do languages just give up.

All these students had experience of learning an elective second language except Ally, who was speaking about her possible enrolment in a college elective L2 class, which demonstrates the perception of language classes being difficult. Additional comments regarding difficulty were instead coded at the next theme 'past achievement' due to a better fit, and these extracts will now be explored as the second sub theme of Historical Orientations.

#### 4.3.5.2.2 *Past achievement*

Past achievement is another key motivating factor in students' decision to continue or discontinue their second language learning, with a high prevalence in this study's data. Positive past achievement obviously has positive effects, compared to the opposite effect of negative achievement. Each of these experiences is discussed in turn.

Students in each focus group spoke of positive past achievement in their second language learning, with many describing the ease they felt when learning L2 skills. Two Forced Discontinuing Students referred to second languages as easy to 'pick up'. Kimberley had studied a variety of languages and found each one easy to learn: "In my primary school I studied Indonesian from grade 4 to grade 6 and I excelled pretty well in that... I did really well at French... Chinese, that's what I excelled in... it was just really easy to pick up". Alysha also used this term, explaining that "my first language that I started learning was French and I was really into that, I started from a really young age and picked it up really easily". Josh and Megan, a Continuing Student and Forced Discontinuing Student respectively, both regarded L2s as easy:

Josh: Yeah. When I actually do the work I do [find it easy].

Megan: I found it really easy because it was like simple English in like in another language. I just found it really easy.

A Continuing Student, Ian also experienced positive achievement, stating that in regards to his elective L2 "I think it's one of my stronger subjects". Patrick, a Forced Discontinuing Student, also experienced ease of learning, recalling "I was introduced to Chinese. I got right into it, it was very comfortable". Past achievement has been

determined as an important factor which affects students' decisions to enrol in an elective L2 subject, and this is clearly demonstrated by Andrew, an Undecided Student, who experienced positive achievement which then motivated him to continue: "by the end of year 8, I could speak Chinese all right. I was doing well in my class".

In comparison, negative achievement is also a strong motivating factor, however only three students made reference to experiencing negative achievement in their prior learning. Hayley, classified in the Discontinuing Students category, explained that she did not enjoy Indonesian and "didn't understand it", later stating that her grandfather had tried to teach her Croatian "but I just couldn't do it". Lucy, while classified as a Continuing Student, shared her experience of feeling a lack of achievement that led to her not wanting to continue with her L2 study: "I was also young for my grade and I sort of started feeling that I wasn't doing as well as my friends, and I guess it was just an age gap. I was a year younger so a lot can change". Brendan, an Undecided Student, explained that "I'm finding it very difficult to understand what's being spoken in class" as one reason for not wanting to continue his elective L2 studies the following year.

These extracts have presented how past achievement in second language study can affect the continuation or discontinuation of it as an elective subject. It was previously demonstrated that students may prefer or excel in different languages, when they have had the experience of learning more than one second language, and that a change in language can also affect their sense of achievement. This leads to the next theme, which explores students' experiences and opinions of changing between languages during their education, and this link to achievement is demonstrated at the end of the theme.

#### 4.3.5.2.3 *Language change*

The theme ‘language change’ was created to code data pertaining to students’ experiences of switching languages during their schooling. Many students discussed their experiences of a change in the language that they were studying, with negative experiences more prevalent than positive ones. Often this language change was a structural school enforcement, although at times it was due to students enrolling at different schools. Six students displayed positive experiences, using terms such as ‘interesting’ and ‘fun’ to describe learning a different language. Tristan, a New Discontinuing Student, explained that when he first experienced the change, “I was all open for it because it's a new language”. Ben, a Continuing Student, shared how changing languages made him realise that he had a preference for one: “I did Chinese and found that fun. Then French again and then went back to Chinese because I enjoyed Chinese more”. Similarly, Ian, a Continuing Student, and Patrick, a Forced Discontinuing Student, both commented that the change introduced them to a new language which they then found interesting, and this directly affected their decision to continue with their L2 study (as Patrick had previously studied both languages as electives):

Ian: I’ve been learning French up until, well from kinder to grade 5. Then in grade 6, you do a year of Chinese so I found that quite interesting but I probably still preferred French and then in year 7 we had half a year each, so that was sort of interesting to keep going a bit more with Chinese and also keep going with the French as well. Then in year 8, I was finding them both quite interesting so I put down and did two languages in grade 8.

Patrick: When I was in year 7 it was French and Chinese. It was Chinese for the first half of the year and then French for a term. That was very interesting because that was the first time I was introduced to Chinese.

Overall, Ben synthesised the experience that the six students who had positive experiences were describing by stating “it's good to experience something new”. Often, this sparked their interest in the new language or confirmed that they preferred their first L2.

However, as stated at the beginning of this theme, there were more negative comments about experiencing a language change, and these were made by Alysha and Aaron, who had moved schools, and Jordan, Tristan, Ben and Peter who had experienced an in-school change. For Alysha and Aaron, both Forced Discontinuing Students, they felt as though they had ‘lost out’ on some of their L2 learning by attending different schools:

Alysha: I went to a couple of schools that actually taught French normally in primary school and then when I moved around I kind of lost [that] because some schools didn't offer French and I was really into that.

Aaron: My first school LOTE was in Victoria and we studied just French. And, that was primary school so you learned hardly anything. Moved over to England, started learning German and Spanish. And, that was only for a year and a half actually, where we were learning those languages. Moved back here, and suddenly it's French and Chinese and all that other work had gone to waste.

Aaron's extract highlights the point that if students are not able to continuously learn a language to suitably develop their L2 skills, they can instead perceive it as a waste of time, which can in turn deter them from wanting to study a second language at school.

Tristan had stated that he was open to the switch when he was young, however continued on to say "but I mean, looking back on it, I mean it does seem almost pretty pointless in a sense... Or, like, just out of nowhere, but like, at the time, when I was younger I was all open for it. I did enjoy doing it". After Tristan's comment about the switch seeming somewhat pointless, Jordan, also a New Discontinuing Student, explained that he felt that the switch didn't make sense in Year 6, as it was a taster for students who were at the school, and then they received another taster in Year 7 when new students joined the secondary school. Therefore the school was essentially providing two tasters and Jordan "definitely felt like I moved backwards" during the year-long break, plus to only study French for half the following year was very disruptive. Of all the students who expressed negative experiences and opinions, Jordan was the most verbal in his dislike of the language switch, largely due to his experience of disrupted learning:

But, I've found it's also disrupted ... Like, year 6, we have to do Chinese for a year and I found that actually really disrupted my learning. By the time I got back to year 7 I'd forgotten a lot... Then, also for year 7, half of it you do Chinese, half of it you do French. I found that actually was quite disruptive to learning. So, when I knew at that age already that French was what I was interested in learning to then come and have it disrupted. So it was almost... I mean, there aren't any electives in year

6 or anything. They do it so that people are aware of the choices, but I felt like it was a bit backwards if people had decided what they wanted to do at that stage.

It is interesting that Jordan understands why his school has the mandatory language change, and makes a very worthwhile point that if students already knew the language that they were interested in early on (either before or shortly after experiencing the language change) they were being prevented from studying the language that they preferred, and also understandably recounts feeling as though he lost some of his L2 skills in the first language while having to learn the second. This could have impacted on his sense of achievement and self-efficacy which therefore could have also affected his motivation. Jordan was the only one to discuss this form of institutional barrier to learning, however for him to experience it means that it is therefore possible that other students had similar experiences.

Interestingly, Ben and Peter had also made positive comments about the switch, showing that it was not a completely negative experience for them. Peter, an Undecided Student, simply stated that he did not like learning Chinese and went back to French, and Ben explained “I felt like I caught awfully fast up to where like my French level was... which should not happen, I don’t think”. He found that the one year of Chinese he experienced was equivalent to seven years of continuous French learning in primary school.

Ben’s comment demonstrates a perception of learning pace in L2 study, which lead directly into the next theme. A change of language has been presented as both a positive and negative experience for students, however the next theme consists only



of the negative perceptions that students hold in regards to the pace of second language learning.

#### 4.3.5.2.4 *Learning pace*

The final sub theme of ‘Historical Orientations’, the data presented in this theme ‘learning pace’ refers to the experiences and perceptions of students regarding the pace of L2 learning at school. Some comments were coded at the overarching level of the learning pace being a negative experience, while other students suggested that an abrupt change or repetition was the reason that they perceived L2s to be badly paced. The general comments are presented first before delving deeper into some of the reasons why many students believed L2 learning to be paced poorly.

Josh, a Continuing Student, described the pace of his L2 class as varying between slow and fast, as “there will be some weeks where we don't really do much, then another week we burn through a whole section of grammar or something. It's yeah... not the greatest”. Another Continuing Student, Lucy stated “I got here and I was quite far behind”. Even after four years of secondary French she explained “I knew nothing. I could say "Hi" and "Thank you." But literally nothing... because high school French you do like nothing”. A Continuing Student also, Ian, in Year 10, agreed, believing that “we only started learning useful stuff really this year”. This is also expressed by Peter, an Undecided Student:

I think we only learnt verbs, like how to conjugate verbs until like grade 9 or 10 and we'd only learnt how to do like two tenses and then this year I've learnt like 10. So, it's a bit different.

Ian and Peter's comments suggest a slow learning pace, as they did not feel like they were learning enough in their earlier years, and this is explicitly made apparent by

Aaron, a Forced Discontinuing Student, and Jordan, a New Discontinuing Student, when considering the following extracts:

Aaron: In year 7 particularly when you're doing the languages and you know, you can ace all of the classwork that they give you and still feel as if you're not really getting anywhere with the language because it's not really at your pace... in a school environment it's not paced well enough. All of the other students keeping you back from learning, that sort of thing.

Jordan: It kind of progresses at an exponential rate. So, you do it very slow and that and as you get towards ... Probably the year which I remember the most new stuff from is year 8... Last year [9] and year 8. That's probably where I got more out of it than all those other years.

A number of students shared experiencing what was described by Patrick, a Forced Discontinuing Student, as an 'abrupt change' when he stated "it's an abrupt change when you get into, when you go from like year 10 to year 11 was when I first felt it. Moving from year 10 Chinese to year 11 Chinese". Tristan, a New Discontinuing Student, also explained the change that he felt when entering a new Year level:

When I was younger it was a lot more basic and colours, and like hello, goodbye, all that sort of stuff. Then, once, really ... It was just grade 8 especially. It was like bam! And I was like oh ok. Then, it was relatively enjoyable, and then... I just felt it was really full-on and I just ... yeah and I wasn't really used to it. There were so many new concepts and stuff I wasn't aware of. Like, it was really hard to do the homework and stuff if you didn't know what to do sort of thing... That's one of the

things I found harder is that if you didn't know how to do something you couldn't fudge it, which you could the year before.

Lucy also commented on initially learning basic skills, but explained why she believed there to be an increase in learning pace:

When we did stuff we had the very basics. I think it's more of encourage people to do it, say that it's not that hard to get people interested and then after that, like college, obviously you want to do it so they push you that much harder.

Brendan, an Undecided Student in Year 11, also experienced an abrupt change in pace, and thought that the curriculum was inversed:

It was a little bit more 9, and 10, and then all of a sudden really picked up this year in how much you were learning, whereas I think it should really be more constant or reversed because you're trying to teach people all these words when it's harder for them to learn.

Another prominent topic within 'learning pace' was the experience of learning being repetitive. This was more prevalent than the abrupt change, however key extracts have been chosen to demonstrate this as many data consisted of the variation of the comment 'it was the same'. For example, Jace and Henry, classified as Forced Discontinuing Students, both described doing the same thing each year, with Ben, a Continuing Student, adding "especially in like the earlier years, from like grades 3 through to 6, like you always learnt the same stuff each year". Andrew, an Undecided Student, and Ella, a Continuing Student, expanded on the repetition of their learning by describing their lessons:

Andrew: I think there just needs to be a different teaching method, the one we have now is quite slow and it's really paced and yeah it is really repetitive. I remember in year 7 one of the teachers had a dice game or something where you throw a dice and there was a certain word matched to it. I heard from the boys in year 10 they were doing the same game. That was three years difference, so....

Ella: In the class we had eight, nine, and ten so he [the teacher] had to keep repeating things for the grade eights. So it was really just keep going in a circle as you go.

These extracts suggest the boredom that students feel when their lessons are repetitive, which in these cases appear to be blamed on the teaching style rather than the curriculum, although both of these factors account for the issues discussed under the theme 'learning pace', which included slow pace, an abrupt change between Year levels and repetitive learning.

This has been the final sub theme for the theme 'Historical Orientations, which was the first main theme explored within the dimension of L2 Learning Experiences. Next, 'Priority' is presented as the second main theme within this dimension.

#### *4.3.5.3 Priority*

One of the more prevalent factors influencing elective L2 enrolment was students' perceptions of the subject regarding the concepts of time and priority. The theme 'priority' was created to explain this factor, which is presented using the sub themes 'other interests' and 'subject priority'. The majority of comments are by students who are not enrolled in an elective L2, and relate to why they did not choose to enrol. The

sub theme ‘other interests’ is presented, followed by ‘subject priority’ which includes how and why students prioritise their subjects in relation to time, careers and their perceptions of the subject.

#### *4.3.5.3.1 Other interests*

This theme encapsulates data where students explained that while they enjoyed second language learning, they had other interests that they prioritised over studying an elective L2. This is demonstrated by extracts from three Forced Discontinuing Students, Kimberley, Kurt and Aaron. Although Kimberley initially listed space and language choice as barriers to her L2 learning, she referred to other interests taking priority over studying the L2 that was offered at her school:

I think if we had that extra space of electives and [school X] did do Chinese I definitely would have picked it, but it came down to priority, and I just preferred other subjects.

Kurt explained that he did enjoy learning second languages, however he preferred other electives which he believed aligned better with his nature:

I’m a very outdoorsy person so I had other electives that appealed to my nature a bit more than what this one did. When I did learn LOTE when I was younger I learnt Japanese in Queensland and then French down here when I moved, and I did enjoy them a lot. Yeah I just prefer other options.

Aaron also mentioned language choice as a barrier when citing other interest over the language subject offered at his school:

I dropped out of the other languages because I had other interests that I would rather spend my time doing especially since they weren't the languages of my choice.

As presented, within these comments Kimberley and Aaron both list additional reasons for not choosing an elective L2 alongside having other interests, with Kimberley's reflection suggesting priority of subjects as another influencing factor. The following sub theme explores students' comments which explicitly refer to subject priority.

#### *4.3.5.3.2 Subject Priority*

The theme subject priority was prevalent in all focus groups and across all categories of students. This theme was discussed in terms of the priority of languages compared to other subjects, and the need to prioritise career subjects over second language learning electives.

Both Lucy, a Continuing Student, and Kate, classified as a Discontinuing Student, made comments which highlight the issue of subject choice and the need to prioritise:

Lucy: I did it [French] again in Grade 11, but I was a kind of a bit unsure whether I was going to do it because I quite enjoy science and it sort of took a science away to do a language.

Kate: There was always better things to choose so it [LOTE] just got pushed backwards.

When discussing subject priority the comparison of subject difficulty was raised by Lucy, who described other students' incorrect perceptions of second language learning as being less difficult than other subjects, whereas she argued that it was

harder: “I don't know if it's considered as academic as something else. A lot of people chose Methods over French...Because it's not considered as academic, like if you say, ‘Oh I'm doing French’. Well they're like, ‘Oh I'm doing math specialized’”. In regards to subject priority when studying, Josh, also a Continuing Student, explained that he prioritised other subjects over French: “with French I have to put in more work than I would my other subjects so it just sort of...yeah, just sort of drift off that”. Henry, classified as a Forced Discontinuing Student, also envisioned French as his least prioritised future subject at college, stating “I would do it, definitely. I guess I would give the other subjects more priority, but I'd still put effort into it, like 100% still”. Also considering future college electives, a Continuing Student, Penny, explained “it wouldn't be a priority, but I'd like to have another language, it would be cool” after agreeing that an elective language could easily be excluded from her timetable at the expense of another subject.

Career subject priority was discussed in all focus groups and can be linked to some students' comments of second languages having no career benefits. Kimberley and Aaron, both classified in the Forced Discontinuing Students category, spoke in general terms of their future careers:

Kimberley: I spent all of grade 7 and eight learning a language and at the end of the day, like, I don't know, it didn't really appeal to me as much anymore, because there was more important things that I could be studying and learning that would excel my future years, although a language is important, I don't know, it just wasn't a top priority.

Aaron: When you start getting your electives you start to think, okay, what's going to be useful to what I want to do?

Other students, such as Forced Discontinuing Students Caleb and Jace, and Oliver, who was in the Discontinuing Students category, had predetermined careers and were able to explain how an elective language subject did not fit their learning pathway:

Caleb: Yeah, if it was available I probably would have done it last year, to do it when I had more elective choices but now I'm kind of trying to fit in the ones I want to do for the career path I've chosen...I want to be a surveyor, so go do people's blocks and follow after my dad, so, I don't reckon I really need a language for that.

Jace: I want to go into the IT industry and programing and all that kind of stuff, um yeah, so the electives that I chose were more important on that side of things then the language that I wanted to learn.

Oliver: I'm interested in a career in sport and I guess there's not really a massive place for learning different languages in there, like it's not really needed...while the language classes are on there are sports classes that I'm, almost need to be doing.

Josh and Patrick, classified as a Continuing Student and Forced Discontinuing Student respectively, unfortunately needed to drop their desired elective language subject to make room for a prerequisite for their chosen career path:

Josh: Then Year 11 I didn't have any room for French so I didn't do it because I was pretty keen to do medicine so I had to get all the prerequisites.

Patrick: I probably would've done French, but I needed a science to be applicable for studying to be a pilot...I had to substitute that instead.



Finally, students made general comments about time and priority in regards to elective language subjects and their perceptions of it. Oliver believed that the time spent learning an L2 at school was not enough, in terms of becoming skilful enough for it to be of benefit, and especially with other subjects to consider:

Oliver: So it's like 30 hours-ish worth of language, it isn't really gonna, it's just over a day's worth of learning, it's not exactly gonna benefit you long term as well as like having to think about other classes and exams and tests and all that kind of stuff that you've still got to fit in.

Also reflecting on the time that needs to be spent of second language learning and the accompanying exams in pre-tertiary study was Lucy, who explained:

It takes more time and it doesn't score as well. At the end of year exams the scheduling of French is always on, it always will clash with something else, because no one does it. So they put it to the back burner. We have Chem and French on the same day. Two of probably the hardest subjects and they put them on the same day because no one does French. So they just sort of go "Oh we'll just put it there."

Dean, a Continuing Student, was concerned that his future degree would not allow the necessary time needed to continue to a second language: "an MED is a lot of time, a lot of studying, so I might not even have the time to learn a language at university", while Kimberley reiterated her issue of priorities in regards to choosing to enrol in an elective L2:

If it was up to me I definitely would but it's just so hard to find the time, and just yeah, priorities...it all comes down to priorities, if I had the space and I had the time I definitely would but I just...

These final general comments, in support of the previous sub themes, clearly demonstrate the overall pressures that students experience in terms of having the time and space to study an elective L2, as well as how and why they prioritise these subjects.

As demonstrated, the prioritisation of an elective L2 can be based on time and other interests, however there can be other factor which influence the priority given to an elective L2, such as teachers and family. The following theme explores how external influences can affect not only the way students prioritise L2 subjects, but also their enrolment choices.

#### *4.3.5.4 External influences*

External influences can have a major impact on students' decision on whether or not to enrol in an elective second language subject at school. This main theme is comprised of three sub themes, the first two being 'teacher' and 'family', as these were the prevalent external influences discussed by students, and the third being 'media' as it was interesting to note the students who were studying Japanese and referred to anime as a motivating factor. Therefore, while not as prevalent as the first two sub themes, it was considered an important factor to present. 'Teacher' and 'family' are firstly explored as external influences followed by 'media'.

#### 4.3.5.4.1 *Teacher*

Teachers have a major impact on their students in a number of ways. This theme refers to how teachers directly affected students' motivation to continue or discontinue their L2 study, either due to being a positive or negative influence.

Students described teachers who had a positive influence as being enthusiastic about their subject and encouraging them to continue. Teachers were described as fun, nice, eccentric and helpful. A prevalent topic was the teacher's enthusiasm, which was most aptly described by Kimberley, a Forced Discontinuing Student, when she explained:

The teacher is probably 90% of the reason people would pick a language in my opinion, because they need to learn it from the teacher, so I mean, it all goes down to how they teach it to us, and how enthusiastic they are about it.

Patrick, classified as a Forced Discontinuing Students, listed positive feedback from teachers as a huge influence to continue:

Positive feedback really pushed me through and I really worked hard in French, .... It was just the constant positive feedback that kept me coming back to choosing a language other than English.

Josh, a Continuing Student, described his teacher as the main reason he continued:

The French teacher, he was awesome at it. Every class was just fun, so I ended up doing it as an elective in 9 and 10...I don't think I would have kept French unless I had Mr. Parker as my teacher. He was a legend.

Ally, also a Forced Discontinuing Student, had been encouraged with positive feedback by her teacher to continue, however the language was not her desired L2 so she did not continue:

The teacher noticed that I was kind of all right at a language and said it was definitely something I should pursue.

Kimberley was the most passionate about how much of a positive influence her Chinese teacher had been on her L2 experience and thus her decision to continue with elective Chinese. She first explained “my Chinese teacher was amazing and I absolutely loved doing Chinese” before elaborating on this further into the interview: “it was the only reason I kept with Chinese because my teacher was just so enthusiastic about it, and I actually enjoyed going to the lessons and actually learning the language because I knew that I’d have fun doing it and I’d enjoy learning it”.

Like the prevalence of enthusiasm as a positive influence, teachers’ lack of enthusiasm was a negative influence discussed by students. Josh thought that “the Japanese teacher was just boring”, while Kimberley and Jace (another Forced Discontinuing Student) both described having teachers who were perceived as unenthusiastic:

Kimberley: I didn’t really like French as much, because the teacher was a little bit unenthusiastic.

Jace: the Indonesian teacher Mrs Kline, she wasn’t as enthusiastic as she could have been I don’t think, about it, so Indonesian didn’t really appeal to me at all.

Alysha and Aaron, Forced Discontinuing Students, and Ella, a Continuing Student, spoke of their dislike of the teacher as being a factor which influenced their experiences of L2 learning:

Alysha: I enjoyed the gist of French but I didn't like learning it because of the teacher.

Aaron: I noticed in my grade a lot of the students didn't have a great relationship with the teacher...So, that caused for a lot of, in French, a lot of people just dropped off because they just didn't like him.

Ella: No one would listen to the teacher because they just didn't like him I guess.

Behaviour management was mentioned by some students as being a reason they disliked the language class, and this is summarised very clearly by Ally, followed by some supporting comments from Ella and Megan (who was also a Forced Discontinuing Student):

Ally: It was really difficult because there were a lot students who just didn't want to be in the class and they wouldn't do anything and they would just make it difficult for the teacher. There was a lot of behaviour management in the class.

Ella: We had teachers spending more time trying to get these people be to quiet and actually do their work instead of teaching.

Megan: Half the class would just muck around and it was really hard for the teacher.

Two students, Andrew and Ian, classified as an Undecided Student and Continuing Student respectively, described student teachers, who were teaching their class while on a practicum for their university degrees, as having a negative influence on their experiences:

Andrew: well last year I was really into Chinese but this year, I think there's been some influences from the teaching, I think, which has put me off doing it next year... We've had student teachers come in every term and it's hard to learn when you've got so many different teaching styles going on... With student teachers I find it hard to concentrate, classes aren't that interesting, so it's put me off doing it in the future.

Ian: I was sort of put off, kind of like Andrew by the student [teachers], the sort of lessons weren't as interesting and engaging.

Ian, who had been interested in both Chinese and French, explained that he became 'put off' by the student teachers in the Chinese class, and so instead continued with French as an elective for the next two years.

Patrick was the only student who spoke of not studying an elective L2 at the advice of a teacher, explaining that after studying both French and Chinese in Year 10, "I stopped because I was told that a number of students had done it and they had dropped one or the other to do well in a singular one", thus he chose to do Chinese in Year 11.

This sub theme has demonstrated the impact that teachers have on students' L2 experiences and thus their motivation to enrol in an elective subject. Family members are just as, if not more, influential upon students' subject choices, and this is the next sub theme to be presented.

#### 4.3.5.4.2 *Family*

Family is often a strong influential force upon students' behaviours and choices. The sub theme 'family' consists of data extracts of positive parental support and influence, with a number of students sharing motivations that stemmed from their family. Darcy, a Continuing Student, and Amanda, an Undecided Student, explained that both of their parents supported their choice to study elective second languages:

Darcy: My parents were very supportive. They feel that it's good to learn a language.

Amanda: When I chose it they encouraged me to keep doing it so it's good.

Caleb and Lucy, a Forced Discontinuing Student and Continuing Student respectively, spoke of being motivated to learn French because their mothers know the language:

Caleb: probably French, just because my mum went to France for a while and studied it for four years and I find it really interesting.

Lucy: my mum did French before and so she knows, she sort of encouraged me to do it because it's important and everything and I see that now.

Lucy shared that her mother encouraged her to study an L2, and George, a Continuing Student, and Ally, a Forced Discontinuing Student, also had mothers who believed in the importance of second language learning and thus influenced their decisions:

George: Mum's always had a belief that everyone should learn languages and she's encouraged me to take up a language at school.

Ally: When I started being home schooled I did a couple of languages. I did Latin because my mom was like all for Latin because it helps other languages.

Paul, Patrick and Jacinta, in the Continuing Student, Forced Discontinuing Student and Discontinuing Student categories respectively, explained how their fathers had impacted them:

Paul: I just chose it because I had to choose between outdoor education and animal care and so yeah I just chose Japanese because my dad's always telling me to get to know another language so I'm just like oh ok...I thought it was the best option out of those subjects but my dad's always told me that it's good to learn a different language, because it broadens your mind, stuff like that. It's just what he's taught me over the years.

Patrick: When I came home and I was prattling off Chinese words my dad looked at me and he said, "You know what, if you can continue that and if you can speak it in your later life you're going to learn a lot because China's right up there, and there's so many people and it's growing so much. You're going to really need it. Companies are going to like it." So, I was pushed even by my parents to keep doing it.

Jacinta: My dad always wished he'd learned a language when he was younger so he encouraged me to learn one as well.

Despite Jacinta's encouragement from her father, she was classified as a Discontinuing Student, which suggests that this was not a strong external influence as



she did not enrol in an elective L2. Had she done so, it would likely have been from an Ought-to Self motivation. Patrick shared his father's positive comments, but concluded by saying both of his parents supported and encouraged his L2 elective choices.

#### 4.3.5.4.3 *Media*

There were two references to media which were coded at this theme, anime and Dora the Explorer, with this theme containing data extracts pertaining to the influence of media as a motivating factor for learning an elective L2. Anime refers to Japanese animation, and while within Japan anime simply means animation, outside of Japan the term is understood to mean either animation from Japan or of a certain style synonymous with that of Japanese animation. Some of the Continuing Students spoke of their motivation for learning Japanese as partly influenced by their interest in anime. Dean explained his introduction to a second language, stating that "I was first exposed to it when I watched Japanese animated cartoons". Two other students expressed their desire to be able to watch anime without needing the English subtitles, which were described as "really bad" by Ella and somewhat bothersome by Darcy when "having to repeatedly flick my eyes up and down from reading and watching the anime". Aaron, a Forced Discontinuing Student, referred to anime as a reason for his second language learning, explaining that "I like to watch that subtitled often just to try to pick up some words although that's not exactly very helpful".

Dora the Explorer was a major source of influence for Ella, classified as Continuing Student, who explained that "I think my love of languages actually started when I was five and watching Dora". Hearing the characters speak in Spanish prompted her to acquire new Spanish words from watching the show which then

developed into an interest of second languages. This media influence sparked her initial interest in second languages, and although Spanish was not one of her main languages of interest, this childhood occurrence certainly had a motivational impact which had manifested into the desire to be an L2 teacher.

External influences has been presented as a main theme for the L2 Learning Experiences component of Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivational Self System, with the sub themes 'teacher', 'family' and 'media'. The following theme 'L2 Background' builds on further influences, in this case from either travelling overseas or having family with a language other than English (LOTE) background.

#### *4.3.5.5 L2 Background*

The next main theme presented is 'L2 Background', and this refers to all data which indicated that students had a background in languages to some extent. This includes whether they had previously travelled to or lived overseas, or had family members who did not speak English as their first language. Both of these experiences provided motivation for learning a second language, and was a factor in students' L2 enrolment decision. This theme consists of two sub themes, firstly 'overseas experience' will be presented followed by 'family background'.

##### *4.3.5.5.1 Overseas experience*

The sub theme overseas experience was created from a combination of initial codes: 'exchange', 'been to country', 'lived overseas', 'overseas study', 'school trip' and 'language background'. These were collated and collapsed into one theme which was redefined as 'overseas experience', which includes data extracts from students who have previously travelled or lived overseas either with family or via an exchange

program. Alysha, a Forced Discontinuing Student, had lived with family in the Philippines:

My mum's side of the family speaks it and in grade 3 we lived up there for nine months so um I learnt a lot of Tagalog up there, and I also went to school there so I had to.

Aaron, another Forced Discontinuing Student, was the only other student who had lived overseas with his family, although they moved to England so he did not learn an L2 except through his schooling there:

Well, I have studied a lot of languages. Like over quite a while because I travelled to England and lived there for 3 years and studied there.

Lucy and George, both Continuing Students, had been on exchange trips to different countries, Lucy to France and George to Germany:

Lucy: Last year I lived in France, I did the same exchange as the girls in our class, the Rotary one. So I lived there for a year and went to school...before then I'd lived in England and we'd spent holidays in France, so I'd been there a few times before. So like, I know France well, and then so that... also knew that I could go back and everything so... sort of encouraged me to do it.

George: I spent six months in year 9 there. On an exchange thing and like I learned a lot and their language systems as well.

Two Continuing Students who were learning French, Ian and Josh, had both been on school trips to France, which had motivated them to return there:

Ian: I think it would be interesting because I could travel, go and travel in France, which I'd like to visit again, cos I went last year.

Josh: That was cool. I was like, "Yeah, I want to do this, I want to go back."... To be able to travel and actually speak a language would just be great.

Ben, a Continuing Student, Jordan, classified as a New Discontinuing Student, and Megan, a Forced Discontinuing Student, all spoke of travel being a positive influence upon their interest in second language learning:

Ben: I had been to China before, but I couldn't speak Chinese back then and it was pretty interesting and I'm still doing Chinese today and I quite enjoy it.

Jordan: I do a fair bit of travel overseas, been to France a few times and other countries in Europe. So, I'm interested in French and also other European languages.

Megan: I like Indonesian though as a language because we went there for a mission trip...My mum's the Indonesian teacher, so she is good at Indonesian. I can see her interacting with people, and I really like, I really want to learn that language.

These extracts have demonstrated the impact that overseas experiences can have upon students' motivations to learn a second language. Megan's comment is interesting as she explained that part of her interest came from seeing her mother using the language in an authentic context, which created the same desire for herself. This source of

motivation is further explored in the next sub theme to be presented, which regards the language background of students' family members.

#### *4.3.5.5.2 Family background*

A number of students were influenced in a positive way by family members who had a background in a language other than English. Two students, Alysha and George, were able to speak a language other than English confidently. Alysha, a Forced Discontinuing Student, lived in the Philippines for several months with her family. She explained "I kind of had to learn a lot of the language, um I don't really know like how to speak fluent Tagalog but I can understand sentences and say sentences because, like sort of expressions and stuff because my mum just talks Tagalog in the house". George was bilingual, explaining that: "I've pretty well always been speaking two languages...German and English. My mum's from Switzerland. I grew up, she was talking to me in German and my dad was speaking to me in English". This gave him a strong appreciation of second language learning, along with his mother's belief at learning a second language is important, which he now shared. In regards to believing that everyone would benefit from learning a second language, George explained:

Yeah, I think there's definitely reasoning behind it and I would think that up until grade 10 people should definitely learn a language enough that they can do what they want, but, there should be at least, people should be encouraged to actually start a language. Like it seems, I have no idea what's it's like not knowing a language and going into it but I would imagine it's pretty daunting and if people were pushed to make

that first step then I think that's a bit more encouraging. Hopefully stick with it for a bit longer then hopefully start enjoying it.

Other students spoke of having an interest in the language that their family member spoke, such as Chelsea, a Continuing Student who reported that “I also learnt a bit of Dutch, from my Nan”, and Megan, a Forced Discontinuing Student, who shared “my grandparents are Dutch”. Tristan, classified as a New Discontinuing Student, described the influence of his family’s language background upon his choice of language, complaining about the languages offered at his school by saying “Because my family has strong heritage in other areas, why do I have to learn French for example?”. Despite previously stating that she had difficulty learning Croatian when her grandfather tried to teach her, Hayley, classified in the Discontinuing Student category, shared that she was interested in learning the language, especially as her family was planning a Croatian trip to visit relatives. Henry, another Forced Discontinuing Student, was the only student who reported disliking his family member’s L1, sharing that he did not like the way that it sounded and that he had no interest in learning it.

This theme has suggested the generally positive influence that students experience from having a family background in a language other than English, and this has positively affected their overall perception of L2 learning. This leads to the final main theme to be presented, which is students’ perceptions of second language learning subjects.

#### *4.3.5.6 Subject perception*

This theme is the overarching idea for the three sub themes ‘beneficial to know’, ‘unimportant’, and ‘gender stereotype’ as they relate to how students perceive elective

second language subjects. First, students' comments regarding the notion that it is beneficial to know how to speak a second language are presented, followed by the contradictory idea that the skill and subject itself is unimportant, and last students' perceptions of languages being a gendered subject.

#### *4.3.5.6.1 Beneficial to know*

This sub theme consists of data pertaining to students' comments of a second language being beneficial for themselves, through both material and personal gains. Students provided a range of reasons why they believed knowing a second language to be beneficial. Patrick, a Forced Discontinuing Student, and Jordan, a New Discontinuing Student, spoke of benefits they had noticed from past travel experiences:

Patrick: Actually, going to Japan, after learning some Chinese, I was able to order food quite well.

Jordan: I've done a fair bit of travel around Europe and stuff.

Definitely... I almost feel like as travelling around Europe, if you're someone who only speaks English, you're almost at a disadvantage.

Ella, a Continuing Student, and Amanda, classified as an Undecided Student, viewed second languages as being beneficial in the future, while Megan, a Forced Discontinuing Student, spoke of gaining a greater perspective on the world:

Ella: Because it's opening so many doors. It's always going to be there and also it can help you with your English studies as well, surprisingly.

Amanda: It could come in handy. You never know when you'd need it.

Megan: I think it's good because you'll learn a lot about the culture as well. You're learning about other countries. It just gives you a wider perspective, really.

Courtney, in Year 9, and Camille, in Year 11, used the open ended survey question to write about their perceptions of the opportunities that second language learning provided:

Courtney: To have a chance to learn second language is a huge opportunity. It is really useful and it helps to understand the other people from foreign countries.

Camille: I think it is important for young people to learn a language to give them more opportunities in life.

Dean and Jordan had both read about possible cognitive benefits of second language learning, which influenced Dean, a Continuing Student, in his enrolment choice:

Dean: I read online that learning a language, being bilingual, connects the two hemispheres of your brain better... [I thought] I reckon I can learn a language, benefits of neurological functions would improve.

Jordan, who was classified in the New Discontinuing Students category, explained that he noticed personal differences from his second language learning:

Jordan: It's very good for you, that's for sure. It's good for the certain parts of your brain particularly. Like, your creative side.

Interviewer: Have you noticed that or is it just things you've read about?



Jordan: Both. It's a very different style, learning a language, as opposed to researching history or standard academics. It just pushes you to learn in different ways and that's, I find, very enjoyable. But, some people find that quite difficult.

A Continuing Student, Paul also believed that there were cognitive benefits: "I think it also helps your mind grab on to things, different things easier. If you've learned something that you're not used to".

These views were held by students who had been classified as Continuing Students, Forced Discontinuing Students, Undecided Students and New Discontinuing Students, demonstrating that students not enrolled in an elective second language still perceived there to be benefits to learning a second language. However, contrary to this, there were students who did not see a value for second language learning.

#### 4.3.5.6.2 *Unimportant*

This sub theme had two other themes collapsed into it, which were 'useless' and 'pointless'. These two collapsed themes were synonyms, which had initially been created in-vivo from the actual words that students were using. During the fourth phase of thematic analysis, these three themes were identified as coding similar data, and thus merged and renamed as the theme 'unimportant'. There were two types of comments regarding the perception that L2 learning was unimportant, and these were either views held by students personally, or students describing views held by others in their school. Rob, Mike and Oliver were all classified as Discontinuing Students, and these were their personal views on the unimportance of language learning:

Rob: I looked at it as like, if I'm not going use the language, then I shouldn't like... cos I've had cousins and stuff that have learned

Japanese and they finish school and then it's just become irrelevant, they haven't used it, and they lose...that fluency I guess... So I figured if I, at the time when I was looking at the class I didn't see myself travelling at all, so I didn't see the point in having a language.

Mike: I didn't really see the point in doing one this year, because I wouldn't really use it.

Oliver: I suppose if you plan on going on a trip and you'd know the country that you want to go to and you'd learn the basics in that, but I haven't really even considered going overseas as yet, and so there'd be no point in me learning another language... yet, I mean there might be down the track a bit but....

Some students suggested perceptions held by other students at their school in regards to elective second languages. Ben, from the Continuing Student category, commented that "It's not seen as important". Peter, an Undecided Student, and Jordan, a New Discontinuing Student, both believed that students at their school held the following perceptions:

Peter: No one really sees it as a thing you have to do to get like a job.

Everyone's always like oh, like you got to get a job, you need maths or science and all that stuff and English. Languages is just like another thing you do for fun if you learn it or, but other people do other subjects instead.

Jordan: People just don't see what they get out of it. And, it does take a lot of work to become fluent in a language to the point that it's useful. I

mean, you can learn a language sort of easily to the point where you can read signs and menus and maybe ask for directions, but people, if they're not thinking about travel or their futures much, it doesn't sort of reverberate with being a very strong reason for them.

Of interest is a point that Rob made toward the end of the focus group interview regarding second language learning, stating “I see it as important, but I don’t see it as important to me currently” which indicates that his perception of languages being unimportant is very much a temporal belief. This sub theme included comments by students about others’ perceptions of the subject, and this also occurred in the following sub theme when students were discussing the perceptions of gender stereotypes for L2 subjects.

#### *4.3.5.6.3 Gender stereotype*

This sub theme was created inductively from the literature and refers to the notion that languages are sometimes considered to be a feminine subject choice. Students were asked if they perceived languages to be more feminine than masculine, and the majority of replies were negative. Rob, classified as a Discontinuing Student, Amanda, an Undecided Student and Alysha, a Forced Discontinuing Student, all disagreed that second language subjects were gendered:

Rob: We don’t have, like you hear other schools where it’s very discriminative towards other people but I don't think we have that.

Amanda: I’ve never really heard someone say that before, that language is a girl’s thing but I don’t agree with that. I think language is regardless of gender, can be learned by anyone.

Alysha: Anyone can do or learn a language and travel to the place if they wanted to. It's not about gender.

A Continuing Student, Ella, and a Forced Discontinuing Student, Jace, spoke of the male/female divide from their experience of second language classes:

Ella: If you look at our class up at the college, there are about four girls including us and the rest are guys. We have a class of eight to ten and most of them are guys. It's definitely not a girly subject because it's just so beneficial to no matter what you want to do.

Jace: The grade 8 class, I didn't do it myself, but I know it was very mixed in terms of boys and girls doing it.

In comparison, two students spoke of there being a gender divide from their observations, Peter, an Undecided Student and Paul, a Continuing Student:

Peter: I think from what I've seen, when I did French this year, girls are a lot more interested...boys will drop it, like, there weren't any Grade Elevens last year.

Paul: I think that some languages appeal more to females than they do to males, like females might want to learn French more because it's the language of love, but guys might want to learn a language like Mandarin or something from Asia because it's more...practical.

The comments presented in this sub theme demonstrate that the majority of the students who participated in the focus groups did not perceive languages to be a gendered subject, and that it was not a factor which they were influenced by when choosing whether or not to enrol in an elective L2 subject. This sub theme is the final

component of the main theme ‘Subject perception’ which was the final main theme of the dimension L2 Learning Experiences.

## **4.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has presented the results from the mixed methods study. First, the quantitative findings were presented, which had been collected from the survey, and where appropriate were presented in accordance with the format of Zammit’s (1992) study. These findings were followed by the qualitative data collected from the focus group interviews, which were organised into prevalent themes which had been created inductively and deductively through the cyclical process of thematic analysis. These themes were presented under the methodological framework of the study, Dörnyei’s (2005) L2 Motivational Self System, with the overarching themes of the Ideal L2 Self, the Ought-to L2 Self, and the L2 Learning Experiences. Within these themes of the framework, the findings were further categorised by the five classifications of students’ L2 profiles (Continuing Students, Undecided Students, Forced Discontinuing Students, New Discontinuing Students and Discontinuing Students). These findings are discussed in the next chapter in relation to the literature, especially in comparison to the results from Zammit’s (1992) study.

# Chapter 5

## Discussion

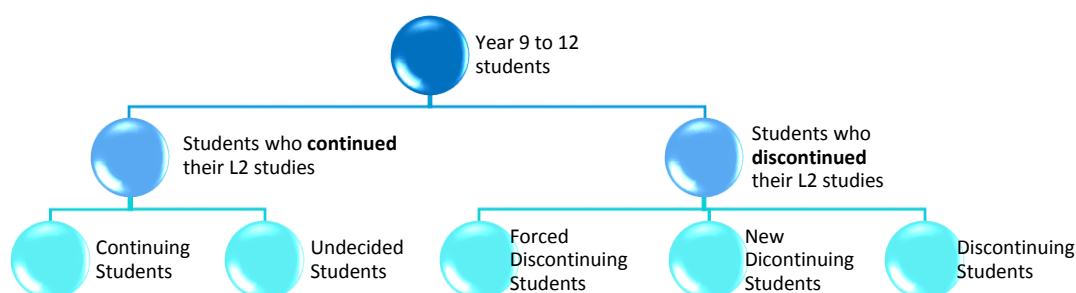
The enrolment decline in Australia's second languages education appears to be due to a lack of interest from students, as the majority discontinue their learning once it ceases being a mandatory subject. The question remains, however: is this the true story of our students' languages education, or is there a more complex array of factors influencing their decisions to discontinue their second language learning? The present research project investigated the reasons why our students do or do not choose to enrol in an elective second language at school, and explored the relationship of motivational factors which affect their decisions. A single reason cannot be termed the cause of the decision, instead a range of major and minor factors, including students' attitudes, desires and future goals, combine to determine their elective second language enrolment choice.

Complex stories have emerged from the findings of the present mixed method study, demonstrating the number of different student profiles that create the constellation of the student cohort in a school, ranging from committed students determined to continue their languages education, to students who have no desire to study a language at school. This exploration of student profiles has uncovered a large percentage of students who have restricted Ideal L2 Selves – that is, they envision themselves as proficient language users, however they experience barriers which

prevent them from taking the necessary steps to following their self guides and moving closer to becoming their Ideal L2 Selves. These are the students who value second language learning, who want to be studying an elective second language at school, and who have clear visions of themselves competently using their language skills in native and professional contexts, yet they are unable to enrol due to institutional barriers which prevent them continuing their desired languages education. Therefore, when inspecting the enrolment decline, and the wave of students going over the edge at the end of compulsory second language learning, it was found that among the students who choose to jump, there is a large number who are being forcefully pushed. The enrolment decline experiences a sharp drop at the end of mandatory languages education in Australia (junior secondary years), however the decline continues right through to Year 12, where only 13% of students finish their schooling with a language subject (Go8, 2007). This trend also needed further investigating, to attempt to understand why students were jumping or being pushed further along their schooling journey.

To achieve this end, as detailed in Section 3.4, a state-wide survey was conducted followed by several focus group interviews. Dörnyei's (2005) L2MSS framework was applied to the context of this investigation, to determine whether the motivational influences reported by participants could be classified using the three dimensions of the construct. Furthermore, participants were classified using the construct adapted from Martin and Jansen (2012), which consists of the five categories Continuing Students, Undecided Students, Forced Discontinuing Students, New Discontinuing Students and Discontinuing Students. Throughout this chapter, students' classifications have been included, when discussing their data, at times

which assist further development of understanding of the theme. The classification of students has been presented in a hierarchical chart in Figure 5.1 to represent each category. The findings have been presented in the previous chapter, and will now be discussed in relation to the literature reviewed in Chapter Two and through the synthesising of the quantitative and qualitative data. First, the most prevalent motivational influences to continue elective second language learning are discussed, followed by the motivational influences to discontinue. Then, the barriers which prevent students from enrolling in an elective L2 are explored, highlighting that schools' own structures are contributing to their languages enrolment decline. Last, four themes are explored in relation to students' attitudes to L2 learning, which were not factors affecting continuation or discontinuation, but were significant findings in the study. As outlined in Section 3.4.2.2 of Chapter 3, students were classified into one of five categories according to their L2 enrolment status and level of learning motivation.



*Figure 5.1:* Classification hierarchy of student motivational categories



## 5.1 Motivational influences to enrol in an L2

Exploring the reasons why students choose to continue their languages education developed an understanding of student attitudes towards languages learning in the Tasmanian context, and allowed comparison with the reasons why students do not choose to enrol in a language subject to determine if they were inversed. The most prominent motivations for studying an elective second language included themes relating to the Ideal L2 Self construct, positive past experiences and external influences, and the perception that second language learning was a beneficial pursuit.

### 5.1.1 Ideal L2 Self

The Ideal L2 Self refers to the self that one wishes to be, and acts as a future self guide by providing the image to which motivation is created to thus reduce the discrepancy between the current and ideal self (Dörnyei, 2005). Continuing students exhibited strong Ideal L2 Selves in terms of high agreement response rates to statements regarding Ideal L2 Selves. A total of 92% of continuing students agreed to some extent (the combined total of the partly agree, agree, strongly agree responses) that they wanted to be the kind of person who spoke a second language well, with 86% agreeing to some extent that they could imagine themselves as someone who was able to speak a second language. The five statements associated with an Ideal L2 Self and students' responses are shown in Figure 5.2. These findings align with those of Moloney and Harbon (2015), who found that the nurturing of an Ideal L2 Self appeared to have motivated students to continue their senior secondary languages learning, and those of Schmidt's (2014), who argued that there was strong evidence of students' Ideal L2 Selves from her interviews with tertiary German learners. Busse

and Williams (2010) also reported that their participants, students in their first year of a tertiary German subject, exhibited a range of future visions, which was suggested to sustain motivation during the more tedious parts of language learning. According to Moloney and Harbon (2015), without explicit guidance, senior secondary students were envisioning themselves as successful future L2 users, and this appeared to provide a strong motivational factor for their future enrolment continuation, even into their tertiary years.

		Elective LOTE		
		Yes	No	Total
The things I want to do in the future involve learning a LOTE.	Disagree	37%	71%	64%
	Agree	63%	29%	36%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
I can imagine myself as someone who is able to speak a LOTE.	Disagree	14%	48%	41%
	Agree	86%	52%	59%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
I want to be the kind of person that speaks a LOTE well.	Disagree	8%	43%	35%
	Agree	92%	57%	65%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
I see myself one day speaking a LOTE with native speakers around the world.	Disagree	29%	70%	61%
	Agree	71%	30%	39%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
If I achieve my dreams, I will use a LOTE effectively in the future.	Disagree	27%	71%	62%
	Agree	73%	29%	38%
	Total	100%	100%	100%

*Figure 5.2: Ideal L2 Self statements and responses from continuing and discontinuing students*

The four themes most prominent within the Ideal L2 Self theme were travel, desire to communicate, future orientations, and interest, which all aligned with findings from previous studies. The first three themes are all internal instrumental reasons, as they are long term goals in which students envision themselves proficient

language users. From the L2MSS (Dörnyei, 2005) perspective, instrumentality can be divided into two types when considering the Ideal/Ought-to L2 Selves: instrumental reasons with a promotion focus (such as future career benefits) relate to the Ideal L2 Self, while instrumental reasons with a prevention focus (such as studying to avoid disappointing a teacher) relate to the Ought-to L2 Self (Dörnyei, 2009). The last theme within the Ideal L2 Self component, ‘interest’, can be linked to previous concepts of integrative and intrinsic motivation.

#### *5.1.1.1 Travel*

From the quantitative results, travel was one of the three equal top responses to why students wanted to continue with their second language learning, with 95% of continuing students agreeing to some extent that they wished to use a second language when travelling. Travel received the highest ‘strongly agree’ response of the seventeen statements regarding continuation reasons, demonstrating its strong influence as a motivating factor on students’ enrolment choice. This is consistent with Spence-Brown’s (2014) study, in which she found that past and prospective travel were “significant motivations for the continuation of study” (p. 10) for senior secondary students studying Japanese. Travel ranked as the fifth most influential factor in Hajdu’s (2005) study while boys continuing their Chinese learning ranked it as the seventh factor in Ren’s (2009) study. Continuing Students in the present study’s focus groups often cited wanting to travel and be able to use the language as influences to continue their studies, with prospective travel and competent language use indicating visions of their Ideal L2 Selves. Spence-Brown (2014) suggested that the relationship between travel and language study may be a two way direction, with each possibly influencing the other, where students may either study the language

because they want to travel, or are inspired to travel from their language learning. Participants in the present study only spoke of wanting to use their language skills when they travelled, and their desires for prospective travel, thus with no student explicitly stating that they were influenced by their language learning to travel it is not possible to determine if the direction of the relationship is the latter. Kohler and Curnow (2007) reported that students in their study deemed languages to be important due to travel, and while this was not discussed as a motivational factor in itself, many of their students believed that it would be beneficial for when they went overseas on holidays or exchange.

The availability of a school trip was reported as a strong motivational factor for several continuing participants in Kohler and Curnow's (2007) investigation. Students in the present study's focus group interviews mentioned school trips, although few of the focus group research sites actually offered a trip. Two schools were offering a general trip for all students in certain Years regardless of enrolment in a language class, while at other schools students lamented that the trips rarely happened due to a lack of numbers in the language classes. According to de Kretser and Spence-Brown's (2010) findings, students were motivated to continue their learning until being able to participate on a school trip, and the experience often enhanced motivation for students to continue their studies upon return.

The desire to travel was a prominent influential factor for language learning continuation, and this was often linked to students' desire to communicate in the target language with native speakers. Communication was therefore also found to be a strong motivation for study, with students often describing an Ideal L2 Self when discussing future communication situations.

### 5.1.1.2 *Desire to communicate*

Schmidt (2011) found that the second factor motivating students to study German at university was the desire to communicate in a German-speaking country, and the quantitative results of the present study imply that this factor can be extrapolated to many other languages, as while the present study did not explicitly refer to speaking in the target country, participants also expressed strong desires to communicate in the target language. This desire to communicate was suggested in the same three contexts found in Schmidt's (2011) investigation: work, travel and study. In the present study, the desire to communicate was a strong influence on participants' choice to continue their languages education, with 71% of continuing students agreeing to some extent that they would like to communicate with native speakers around the world.

Furthermore, 57% of continuing students agreed that they needed a language for future studies and 67% indicated that they would like to get a job where they could use their second language skills, both which could possibly refer to doing so in the target country. This is linked to findings by Rothman, Zhao and Lonsdale (2014) and Moloney and Harbon (2015), which indicated that students perceived the ability to communicate provided them with increased cultural understanding. In the focus groups, the importance of this factor is demonstrated by its prominence, with communication discussed by students of all categories except for the two participants in the New Discontinuing Students category. Darcy and Kurt, a Continuing Student and Forced Discontinuing Student respectively, both spoke of their belief that being able to communicate with a native speaker in their first language enabled a deeper and more meaningful conversation, provided of course that one had the required skills to communicate in the target language. Students spoke of their desires to be fluent and

expressed strong Ideal L2 Selves when explaining who they would like to talk with, such as when Caleb shared that he would like to be able to speak French with his sports teammate. Some students spoke of the desire to communicate with family members, and this is consistent with findings from Kohler and Curnow's (2007) study, in which many continuing students reported learning a language to be able to talk with relatives, or due to their own cultural background.

The desire to communicate was discussed in terms of students' future orientations, such as for work or study. Continuing students explained their future plans in either a detailed or abstract manner during the focus group interviews, with some referring to desires to work overseas in general while other students had set careers for which they were studying languages.

#### *5.1.1.3 Future orientations*

Future orientation refers to students' future plans for study or work that involve studying a second language. In the present study, 68% of continuing students agreed to some extent that they would like to get a job where they could use their second language skills. This relates to Schmidt's (2011) study in which she found that the third fundamental motivational factor for tertiary German study was the possibility of future professional advantage. This is also consistent with findings from Spence-Brown's (2014) study, in which 57% of senior secondary Japanese learners considered career benefits gained from their study as a major or moderate influence. Four participants in the present study, Kurt, a Forced Discontinuing Student, and Bec, Lucy and Ella, Continuing Students, all had strong Ideal L2 Selves with a firm idea of their future careers, which were coaching, international relations, nursing, and teaching respectively. Other students in the focus groups spoke more generally about

the employment benefits that are gained from second language skills, and their interest in possibly working overseas. Only a small number of participants in Kohler and Curnow's (2007) study referred to career-related reasons for continuing their studies, however when they did it was not specific to any career and instead generalised more towards possible benefits that could be gained. In a similar finding, participants in Lo Bianco and Aliani's (2013) investigation did not perceive languages to feature in their future studies or careers, however some of their participants did mention career advantages when asked about the benefits of learning a second language. Interestingly, Darcy did not consider any career when he first began his languages education, however as a Continuing Student he explained "I've realised that it will be good to learn a language and keep going with it" which demonstrates the importance of students being exposed to languages and realising the options that become available to them after acquiring language skills.

Consistent with the findings of Kohler and Curnow (2007), Lo Bianco and Aliani (2013), Schmidt (2011) and Spence-Brown (2014), continuing and discontinuing students spoke of future L2 study, both within and outside of the school system. Some students such as Ian and Ella had set enrolment plans, while others were still deciding about possible enrolment. A few students, like Ally, were planning to enrol at college if it were possible, while other students were going to wait and see if they had room in their timetable for a language, such as Penny, who at the time of the focus group interview was rather vague on her future study plans in terms of when and what language. Hayley, a Discontinuing Student, suggested that she might try to learn a language in the future outside of school, as did Aaron, a Forced Discontinuing Student who said that if he was unable to learn his preferred language at school he

would try and learn it in his own time. This demonstrates that regardless of their classification status of a continuing or discontinuing student, second language learning is a valued and desired subject area to a range of students. This is a significant finding, as it infers that enrolment figures do not represent students' attitudes towards L2 learning.

As pragmatic benefits are not always an initial motivating factor, it is essential to look beyond the internal instrumental benefits of second language learning and explore the intrinsic interest which motivates students to continue their language education. Students can be interested independently or in a combination of the language, culture or country of their language learning, and this can provide a strong motivation to study an elective language subject.

#### *5.1.1.4 Interest*

Personal interest in language, culture, and second language learning is a strong motivating factor for student to enrol in elective second language learning. While the previous three themes of the Ideal L2 Self dimension all include pragmatic benefits of learning a second language, the last prevalent topic in this dimension is based purely on intrinsic interest and is an extremely internal factor. Schmidt (2011) explained that her findings represented a clear dominance of the first of the three fundamental factors influencing students' motivations to study German at university, with 27.66% of the variance explained by factor one, which relates to interest in language and culture. In comparison the other two fundamental factors accounted for less than 10% each of the total variance, and Schmidt (2011) argued that this dominance of general interest and joy of learning language was consistent with previous studies. Interest in the language or culture often enhanced students' enjoyment of Japanese, according to



participants in de Kretser and Spence-Brown's (2010) study. Another study which focused on a specific language, Spence-Brown's (2014) investigation of students' motives for Japanese learning found that an interest in Japan and Japanese culture was one of the top three influential factors. Similar to the present study, Kohler and Curnow (2007) interviewed continuing and discontinuing students who were studying a range of languages, and their findings highlighted that many continuing students cited personal interest as a reason to maintain L2 learning.

### **5.1.2 Historical Orientation**

Historical orientation refers to students' past second language learning experiences, and how this has influenced their motivation to continue. This theme includes the past experiences of academic achievement and the ease of learning, a positive change of language, the accepted challenge of language learning, and enjoyment of the subject. All of these factors contribute to positive learning experiences which encourage students to continue their languages education once it is not compulsory.

#### **5.1.2.1 Achievement**

According to Lo Bianco (2016, as cited in Vukovic, 2016), students are more willing to continue their languages studies if they feel they are progressing with their skills in the language, and are less likely to discontinue. Kohler and Curnow (2007) found that the majority of continuing students cited reasons relating to academic success and achievement as the top most influential factor. In the present study the reason of being good at a language was ranked the ninth most influential factor, with a total of 85% of continuing students agreeing to some extent with this statement, while 62% of students agreed that studying a language was easy. Although achievement did not

appear to be as strong an influence compared to previous studies, a number of students in the focus groups from the Continuing Student, Undecided Student and Forced Discontinuing Student categories spoke about their positive achievement in ways that suggested it did have some impact on their decisions to continue their studies. Many students described the ease with which they ‘picked up’ a language, such as Kimberley and Alysha. Ian referred to his language class being his best subject while Patrick described feeling very comfortable with his Chinese learning. Megan thought that learning Indonesian had been a simple task, and it can be inferred that this positive experience influenced her eagerness to study it again, along with other languages. Lily, a Year 12 student, commented in the open ended survey question that: “learning French at college inspired me to start learning Finnish. I found that having already learned one LOTE, I found it much easier to learn a second”. From this it can be argued that positive experiences influence students’ motivation in beneficial ways, and encourage continuation of their languages education.

#### *5.1.2.2 Language change*

Lily’s positive experience of a language change was echoed by some students in the focus groups: some who had learnt two languages interchangeably as part of their school’s curriculum structure, and others who had chosen to study two languages simultaneously. Liddicoat et al. (2007) explained that planned discontinuity is a feature of some schools’ languages programme as they expose students to more than one language during the compulsory years of language study. Discussing the school’s change of language, Ben stated that “it’s good to experience something new” with other students describing learning a new language as fun and interesting. Learning

two languages simultaneously, Patrick referred to switching between the two as quite refreshing, and Ian explained that an interest in both languages that were offered influenced his decision to continue with them. While Liddicoat et al. (2007) suggested that this type of languages programme can be a contributing factor to enrolment decline, these students indicated that they enjoyed experiencing a different language to the one they initially began learning at their school. Indeed, many students spoke of continuing with the language that they preferred, thus compulsory ‘taster’ programmes can be beneficial in providing students with a positive languages education experience. Some students discussed choosing the language that they found more challenging, and this is another historical orientation that can influence students’ continuation.

#### *5.1.2.3 Worthwhile challenge*

Language learning being a worthwhile challenge was cited as the fourth reason to continue Japanese in Spence-Brown’s (2014) study, which according to her may have indicated the views of conscientious students, who may have been more likely to complete a voluntary survey and therefore may not represent the population. However, she argued that it suggests that Japanese is a challenging subject, and that some students like to study subjects which they find challenging. Interestingly, while many students in the present study indicated that they perceived language learning to be more difficult than other subjects, two students commented during the focus group interviews on the notion of enjoying the challenge of learning, and that this was a specific reason for their continuation. Patrick explained that he preferred Chinese over French because he found it to be a bit more of a challenge, and Dean stated that he chose Japanese because second language learning was supposed to be hard, implying

during that focus group interview that he believed himself to be a successful student with the intelligence to achieve success in a difficult subject. A male Year 10 student chose to use the open ended response at the end of the survey to provide his outlook on second language learning, explaining that he thought “it was interesting and a bit challenging”, however it is unclear if he viewed the challenge in a positive or negative manner. The motivation to study a language due to its challenging nature was also found by Schmidt (2014) and Busse and Walter (2013), with the present study confirming that this finding is a possible factor in students’ decisions to continue their second language studies.

#### *5.1.2.4 Enjoyment*

Enjoyment of learning Japanese was ranked as the top motivator for students to continue their learning according to the findings of Spence-Brown’s (2014) study. Within the top influential theme of academic success and achievement, Kohler and Curnow (2007) also included students’ comments regarding enjoyment of learning. Furthermore, high enjoyment levels were found by Rothman et al. (2014) to correlate with high levels of academic achievement and ease of learning. A positive experience in which students liked the subject, teacher and learning environment was reported as an influential factor for participants by de Kretser and Spence-Brown (2010). Five of the seven top motivating factors in the present study relate to positive learning experiences, such as enjoying the subject, finding it interesting, and liking the teacher. This suggests that students are motivated to continue their studies due to intrinsic reasons, which is consistent with conclusions drawn by Spence-Brown (2014), Rothman et al. (2014), and Kohler and Curnow (2007). A number of students in the focus groups, from all categories except the Discontinuing Students, spoke about their

enjoyment of second language learning, using terms such as fun, interesting, enjoyable and likeable. Darcy, a Continuing Student, described his elective language class during the focus group discussion: “we do get a lot of work done in Japanese. We don’t normally play around. It’s fun and we do enjoy each other’s company but we do work as well”. Andrew, an Undecided Student, explained that he wasn’t intrinsically interested in L2s, but “I just liked the subject of Chinese” and this enjoyment had kept him continuing his studies. Some students attribute their enjoyment of learning directly to the teacher, with Kimberley being the most strongly spoken about this influence:

It was the only reason I kept with Chinese because my teacher was just so enthusiastic about it, and I actually enjoyed going to the lessons and actually learning the language because I knew that I’d have fun doing it and I’d enjoy learning it.

Enjoyment was cited by each of the twelve interviewees in Busse and William’s (2010) study, with participants explaining their previous positive experiences had motivated them to continue their tertiary German studies. Kimberley’s comment demonstrates the influence of external factors, such as teachers, which is discussed next in terms of a positive influence on students’ decisions to continue their language studies.

### **5.1.3 External influences**

Students can be motivated to study a second language by positive external influences such as family, teachers or peers. This can be in the form of specific encouragement to study a second language, or when students are inspired by those around them to

continue their studies. For example, some students in the focus group interviews referred to their parents learning the language previously, or the enthusiasm they saw from their teacher.

#### *5.1.3.1 Family*

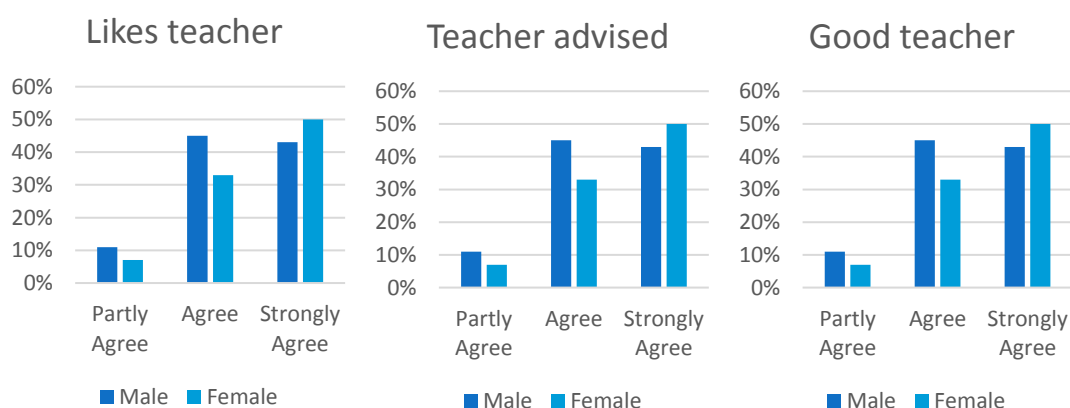
Moloney and Harbon (2015) found that 58% of students in their study cited family or friends as an influence to continue their languages education. This is consistent with Rothman et al.'s (2014) study in which teachers and parents/carers were found to have the greatest influence on senior secondary students' subject choice, however parental/carer influence significantly reduced for the specific subject of languages. Family was also major influential factor for 13 to 14 year old boys to continue their Chinese learning according to Ren's (2009) study, with the opinions of family members the top ranked factor, followed by teacher opinions. In Ren (2009) and Hajdu's (2005) findings, the external influences of teachers, family and friends received similar response rates between the two studies, while in Spence-Brown's (2014) study, the teacher was the fifth most influential factor. Parental influence was a motivating factor for continuing students in the present study, with three quarters of participants agreeing to some extent that their parents encouraged them to learn a second language. This is consistent with findings from Zammit (1992), where 80% of continuing students cited parental encouragement. Interestingly in the present study, although students in the focus groups spoke of how parents were encouraging or had inspired them to learn a language in some way, they disagreed that parents had influenced them when choosing an elective second language, stating that their parents were supportive of whatever subjects they chose. This suggests that students in the focus group interviews interpreted parental influence as an initial motivating factor

instead of affecting their continuation decisions. This aligns with findings from Kohler and Curnow's (2007) study, in which students did not cite parents as an influential factor. As their findings were in contrast with those of Zammit (1992), Kohler and Curnow (2007) suggested that the difference may have been due to the age of students when choosing their subjects, the qualitative instead of quantitative method, or an actual difference in findings. This phenomenon is mirrored in the present study, where the qualitative results conflict with the quantitative results regarding parental influence, which suggests that data collection methods may indeed influence students' responses. However, the questions in the survey were not explicitly stated as parental influence ('my parents encourage me to learn a LOTE'; 'my parents tell me Australians should learn a LOTE'; 'my parents tell me that learning a LOTE will get me a better job') whereas in the focus group interviews the topic was referred to in terms of asking students if they were influenced by family when considering their L2 enrolment. Thus, the use of 'influence' compared to 'encouragement' could have been interpreted differently by students, despite the basket of questions being used to assess parental influence.

#### *5.1.3.2 Teachers*

Similar to the findings of Ren (2009), Hajdu (2005) and Spence-Brown (2014), in the present study teachers were a strong influencing factor in students continuing their second language learning. The reason of liking the L2 teacher ranked equal first with two other statements on 95%, followed by the reasons the teacher is good (92%) and the teacher advised students to continue (80%). Teacher enthusiasm was a common theme discussed in the focus groups, cited as a prominent influential factor, along with teachers who made learning fun and interesting. This suggests that teachers'

characteristics and teaching styles are important in influencing whether or not students continue their studies, and this is perfectly summarised by Kimberley who stated “the teacher is probably 90% of the reason people would pick a language...it all goes down to how they teach it to us, and how enthusiastic they are about it”. This also demonstrates the importance of teachers encouraging students to continue their studies and providing positive feedback, which as Patrick shared, can be another strong motivating factor to continue: “it was just the constant positive feedback that kept me coming back to choosing a language other than English”. The extent of agreement for the three teacher related statements in terms of gender can be examined in Figure 5.3, which shows that males were more likely to indicate that they ‘agree’ with the statements compared to females who more commonly chose ‘strongly agree’ as their response. Interesting, no males chose any of the disagree responses for the first statement regarding liking the teacher, suggesting that a good relationship with the teacher is a vital component in encouraging boys to continue their L2 studies.



*Figure 5.3:* Extent of Continuing Student agreement with the three motivations related to the L2 teacher



Furthermore, 95% of males agreed to some extent that they continued their second language study because there was a good teacher (see Figure 5.4). Both of these statements were ranked higher than the female responses, which could be inferred as boys being more influenced by the teacher than their female counterparts, or more willing to give more positive responses. Either reason demonstrates the importance of teachers engaging with their male students to encourage continuation.

		What is your gender?		
		Male	Female	Total
I like the LOTE teacher.	Disagree	0%	10%	5%
	Agree	100%	90%	95%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
The teacher advised me to continue with LOTE.	Disagree	25%	14%	20%
	Agree	75%	86%	80%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
There is a good LOTE teacher.	Disagree	5%	12%	8%
	Agree	95%	88%	92%
	Total	100%	100%	100%

*Figure 5.4:* Cross tabulation of Continuing Student responses regarding their second language teacher as a motivational influence

### 5.1.3.3 Peers

In terms of peers, students in this study did not believe that their friends were an influential factor in any way, which contrasts with the findings of Ren (2009), Hajdu (2005) and Spence-Brown (2014). Moloney and Harbon (2015) found that 58% of participants in their study cited family and friends as an influence to continue, however as this factor was combined it is unclear what percentage of students were referring to their peers as an influencing factor. The phenomenon regarding the lack

of peer influence is discussed in Section 5.4.4 of this chapter, within the exploration of students' attitudes towards second language learning, as this factor was not a motivational reason to continue language study.

The external influences of teachers and parents have been demonstrated to have a positive impact on students' decisions to enrol in an elective second language subject. However, students' own perceptions of second language learning, and the benefits that they may gain from having L2 skills, are a personal reason for continuing to enrol in an elective L2 at school.

#### **5.1.4 Subject perception**

Within the theme of subject perception, the perception that languages were beneficial to know was prominent as a reason that students in the present study continued their second languages education. A number of students cited benefits that they perceived they would gain from learning another language, and these included personal as well as instrumental advantages.

Continuing students cited a range of benefits gained from second language learning, which included future opportunities, the ability to use a language for travel and work, and the cognitive advantages gained from learning. This is consistent with findings from Lo Bianco and Aliani's (2013) investigation, where students remarked on career, communication, travel, and personal benefits. Overall, 86% of participants in the present study disagreed to some extent with the statement that learning a second language was useless. Rothman et al. (2014) found that a major reason to study an elective L2 were the cognitive advantages, such as effective thinking. A few students in the present study's focus groups spoke of second language learning as being

beneficial, but Dean and Jordan were two students who specifically detailed cognitive advantages:

Dean: Learning a language, being bilingual, connects the two hemispheres of your brain better.

Jordan: It's good for the certain parts of your brain particularly. Like, your creative side.

A few students took the opportunity in the survey to write about the benefits they perceive to be gained from second language learning. Sasha, a Year 12 student, explained:

I feel that learning a language develops pathways not able to be created by other subjects. It allows opportunity for travel and for further study, and also allows one to develop knowledge of the world. ... It has allowed me to make connections globally, and may influence the opportunities for work available in the future.

A more general statement was made by Violet, a Year 10 student, who commented “I believe that learning a language other than English is extremely important and will benefit you throughout all stages of life”. Megan commented about the benefit of learning about the culture as well as the language, and this was also expressed by participants in Rothman et al.’s (2014) study who believed that there was the benefit of intercultural understanding to be gained from L2 study.

Continuing students identified a range of benefits gained from learning a second language, and these recognising these advantages meant that they were an influential factor in students’ decisions to continue to enrol in an elective L2 subject.

This final theme concludes the discussion of prominent motivations for enrolling in an elective second language. The following section explores the factors which motivate students to discontinue their languages education.

## **5.2 Motivational influences not to enrol in an L2**

There were two prominent main themes which influenced students' decisions to discontinue their second language learning, 'historical orientations' and 'priority and subject perception'. Within these themes are students' past negative experiences of second language learning, including the difficulty they experienced and levels of achievement, and the way that students prioritise their subject when choosing their electives as well as when they allocate study time for these. Student perceptions of L2 subjects emerged as an influence to not enrol in an elective language, with a lack of usefulness for future orientations a strong motivating factor, along with a lack of interest in learning a second language.

### **5.2.1 Historical Orientations**

Like the identical theme in the 'motivations to continue' section above, historical orientations refer to students' past second language learning experiences, although in this section it refers to the negative experiences which influenced students to discontinue their L2 learning. First, the overall negative experiences are discussed, followed by the subject difficulty and lack of achievement experienced by students.

#### ***5.2.1.1 Negative experience***

In terms of negative second language learning experiences, there was little gender difference between responses of the discontinuing students in the present study, which contrasts with findings from Zammit's (1992) study, which found that boys were

more likely to express negative experiences. Spence-Brown (2014) found that 15% of students who were considering discontinuing their studies cited lack of enjoyment as a reason not to continue with elective Japanese. ‘Boring’ was ranked the top discontinuing reason for boys studying Chinese in Ren’s (2009) study, with lack of enjoyment ranked fourth, while ‘bad learning experience’ was ranked the second most influential factor for discouraging continuation. From the quantitative results, the present study does not align with the findings of others, as negative experiences did not rank among the top eight reasons for discontinuation. Less than 45% of students agreed that they discontinued their studies because they were not good at their language, or they did not like the teacher, learning a language, or the language class. Not wanting to study an L2 ranked seventh on the list of discontinuation reasons, however students’ reasons for not wanting to do so are unknown. This is where follow up focus groups can be most useful, as was the case in the present study in which participants were able to freely and fully share their negative experiences instead of conforming to predetermined answers on a questionnaire. Students from each of the five categories shared negative learning experiences, although these were more prominent from the Discontinuing Students category. Students often referred to their languages classes as boring, repetitive, slow, unappealing and uninteresting. Both lesson content and teachers were blamed for negative experiences. This is consistent with findings from Lo Bianco and Aliani (2013), in which some participants reported experiencing repetition and boredom.

The focus group interviews revealed how negative experiences of learning a second language can affect students. Andrew was classified as an Undecided Student, as he was not planning on continuing his Chinese studies. He had initially enrolled in

an elective L2 subject because he began enjoying it while it was a compulsory subject, however he explained that he was losing interest in the class, and did not envision using Chinese in the future. Andrew attributed this loss of interest to the teaching structure of the class, in terms of pace and repetition, along with the experience of student teachers doing their practicum placements. In the same focus group, Ian agreed that he had been ‘put off’ by the student teachers taking the class, describing their lessons as less interesting and engaging. However, it was not only student teachers who influenced students’ decisions to discontinue. Other students explained that their teachers had been boring or unenthusiastic, and the impact of this is shown by a Year 11 male student who commented in the open ended survey question:

I may have continued to learn French in secondary school, but I was put off by my primary school French teacher ... who repeated the same, overly-simple content every year from grade 1-6, making my experience, understandably, repetitive and unappealing.

Aaron believed that students at his school did not study French due to a bad relationship with the teacher, and a number of students in the focus groups commented on teachers’ capabilities for behaviour management as a disincentive to continue. Participants in Lo Bianco and Aliani’s (2013) study also commented on disciplinary issues in their classes. This issue was outlined clearly in the present study by Ella, who commented that some of her teachers spent more time attempting to control the class than they did teaching the language.

Some students were disenchanted with their language learning after a change of language, which was due to either changing schools, or school curriculum

structures. Alysha and Aaron had experienced language changes from moving schools, and both felt that it was wasted learning and that they had ‘lost out’ on the opportunity to continue their studies. Four students discussed experiencing a language change within their K-12 school due to a structural decision that every student learn Chinese in Year 6 after learning French from Kindergarten. According to Liddicoat et al. (2007), planned discontinuity is a feature of some language programmes, and their explanation of ‘taster’ programmes appear to define the structure of this school’s languages programme. One student in particular, Jordan, was extremely negative about this change, explaining that it had disrupted his learning and he felt that he had lost some of his previous skill by being made to change languages for a year. He argued that “when I knew at that age already that French was what I was interested in learning to then come and have it disrupted” was a real challenge to his learning, and this likely affected his sense of achievement and possibly his motivation.

Negative experiences including teachers, lessons and language changes were all shown to influence students’ elective L2 enrolment decisions. Finding the subject hard and not achieving much success in learning were prominent negative experiences which for this reason have been classified in their own theme for discussion.

#### *5.2.1.2 Difficulty and past achievement*

Positive achievement and self efficacy are two essential factors to keep students motivated to learn any subject, so when students perceive second language learning to be hard, experience difficulty learning the content, do not achieve good results, and have low self efficacy in their language abilities, they are much more likely to discontinue their L2 studies. These factors emerged as strong influences in both the present and previous studies. Difficulty was a common remark made by participants

in Lo Bianco and Aliani's (2013) study, with some students also commenting on the high workload and required effort. Participants in de Kretser and Spence-Brown's (2010) study indicated perceived difficult, high workload and required effort as reasons for students not continuing their Japanese studies. Finding Chinese learning hard was the top reason of discontinuation by 13 and 14 year old boys in Ren's (2009) study, with lack of achievement ranked as the fifth reason. In the present study, the need for constant work in a languages subject ranked as the fourth highest discontinuation reason. In results identical to that of Zammit's (1992) study, two-thirds of participants in the present study thought that languages were harder than Science, however, while three quarters of her participants indicated that maths was harder than languages, around two thirds of participants in the present study indicated the same perception. For both of these statements, males were less agreeable than females, and more so when comparing science to languages, with 75% of males indicating that science was easier than languages. Based only on 'major influence' responses, difficulty was ranked fourth in Spence-Brown's (2014) study, however combining the minor, moderate and major influence responses changed it to the number one reason for students' discontinuation. In the present study, Dean postulated that discontinuing students were further deterred when they perceived that continuing students were struggling with language learning, as they believed it to be too hard when they saw continuing students quit. This is a valid suggestion, although students could be discontinuing for a range of reasons. However, peer perceptions could be influenced by continuing students who complain that the subject is difficult, especially if they were believed to be high achieving students.



As a major influence, high workload was ranked the fifth reason for discontinuation in Spence-Brown's (2014) study, but became the third reason when combined with the minor and moderate influences, which she argued is significant because students perceive that this impacts on their other subjects. This is linked to comments made by students in the present study who admitted that they prioritised studying other subjects over language study because of time and effort, like Josh who, due to having to put more work into French, focused on other subjects instead. Many students in Kohler and Curnow's (2007) study indicated that they had discontinued languages learning due to the high workload, with often little outcome. Jordan, classified as a New Discontinuing Student, cited the high workload as one reason for his recent discontinuation, explaining: "it's just whilst you're at school it's hard to fit in ... It's just too hard to fit around the amount of work that's actually necessary to learn it properly". This is especially relevant when considering the different hours of study needed to reach proficiency in different languages, such as Chinese requiring more study time than French (Orton, 2008).

Director of the Asia Education Foundation (AEF), Kathe Kirby (2016, as cited in Vukovic, 2016) argued that languages education in Australia is not differentiated, despite the difference between languages and best learning styles, and that hours of provision and teaching styles are two large barriers that prevent students progressing past simple language forms and vocabulary. This was a common complaint expressed in the focus groups of the present study, with students stating that their language classes were slow and repetitive. This is demonstrated by Aaron who explained that "you can ace all of the classwork that they give you and still feel as if you're not really getting anywhere with the language because it's not really at your pace", along with

Lucy and Ian who argued that they did not learn anything useful until the later years of secondary or senior secondary schooling. Andrew, an Undecided Student, explained in the open ended comment section of the survey: “while I do enjoy learning a LOTE (Mandarin), I feel the classes are too slow and that it is a waste of time when I could be learning more relevant subjects to my study”. This suggests that although students have an interest in learning languages, if the classes aren’t enjoyable and students do not feel that they are making adequate progress, it is a subject which is easily at risk of being dropped for a more relevant subject.

The findings of the present study, and their consistency with those of previous ones, demonstrate the significance of this factor of difficulty and past achievement on students’ discontinuation of second language study. Andrew’s comment of slow progress through badly paced teaching, and his perception that despite enjoying language learning he could have been learning something more relevant to his studies instead, highlights the issue of students’ subject perception and subsequent prioritisation. A common theme expressed in the focus group interviews was that while students were interested in studying a second language, it was prioritised below subjects more related to future study or career pathways, or students’ other interests were rated higher than their language interest when it came to subject choice. This resulted in languages being relegated to the bottom of subject lists, and the limited amount of electives meant that subject lines were filled before reaching the language subject.

### 5.2.2 Priority and subject perception

The prioritisation of subjects is a motivational factor affecting students' enrolment in an elective L2, with second language subjects often falling to last place on students' subject preference list. This can be due to the need to prioritise subjects for future orientations, stronger interests in other subject areas, or a complete lack of interest in a languages education.

#### 5.2.2.1 *Career subject priority*

According to Kalokoski and Nurmi (1998), secondary students choose to invest in subjects which align with pathways to their future careers or studies, and this is concurrent with findings from Davies et al. (2008). This point is demonstrated by Kate, who stated that her future career was sports and nutrition based, and therefore "I'd just stick to learning sport stuff and never really focus on language". This is supported by the finding from Rothman et al. (2014) that the most common reason senior secondary students did not study a language was due to the lack of relevance to their future careers or study. When considering subject relevance, 15% of continuing students in Spence-Brown's (2014) study cited other subjects as being more useful as a reason for contemplating discontinuing their senior secondary Japanese study. In the present study, response rates were higher for three statements which link to this belief that other subjects are more useful: 66% of discontinuing students agreed to some extent that they did not need a language for their future studies, while 54% agreed that it would not get them a better job and 50% cited that they preferred other subjects which were scheduled at the same time as a language. In relation to this, students in Kohler and Curnow's (2007) study who had discontinued their languages learning cited the importance and relevance of the subject to their current and future lives as a

reason for choosing subjects other than a language, at times with specific reference to career pathways. Spence-Brown (2014) found that after the top six reasons for discontinuation came reasons related to students' perceived usefulness of Japanese as a subject, especially in terms of careers or opportunity for language use, along with general relevance of what was being learnt. In the present study this was a perception held by many of the students classified as Discontinuing Students, especially in conjunction with their future career orientations.

#### *5.2.2.2 Relevance and interest*

The relevance of language study to careers is directly linked with the theme of subject priority, although a number of students in the present study referred to languages itself as pointless, unimportant, unnecessary, and useless. Speaking generally about his peers, Jordan argued that “people just don't see what they get out of it. And, it does take a lot of work to become fluent in a language to the point that it's useful”, indicating that students need a reason to be studying a language. For some students, a lack of interest in languages was the main reason that they did not enrol in one, and this was indicated by just over half (52%) of the discontinuing students. This aligns with Ren's (2009) study in which boys ranked a lack of interest as the top influential factor for discontinuation. The reference to other interests was common among the Discontinuing Students in the focus groups of the present study, along with a lack of enjoyment when previously studying a second language at school. The New Discontinuing Students, Jordan and Tristan, had initially enjoyed their language learning experiences, although negative experiences leading to a loss of interest and enjoyment had caused them to discontinue their elective study. Martin and Jansen (2012) argued that students who have opportunities to hear or use a foreign language,

are in contact with native speakers, who have backgrounds in foreign languages, have parents who have studied languages, who travel overseas, or have had good foreign language experiences will all have high language capital compared to students who do not have any of these opportunities or experiences. They posited that language capital affects the motivations of students to continue or discontinue their studies. Oliver, a Discontinuing Student, made a comment regarding L2 relevance which clearly highlights Martin and Jansen's (2012) concept of 'language capital':

Oliver: I suppose, if it has meaning to you ... I don't know anyone that speaks a different language and my family's all English and I mean there's ... nothing really inspiring me to learn a language, cos I've not ever [been] exposed to it.

This lack of language capital is a strong influence in Oliver's disinterest in second language learning and perceived lack of relevance. Interestingly, some students referred to this perception of uselessness in regards to their current context, but believed that if it became important to learn a language in the future then they would. This is demonstrated by both Oliver and Rob, another Discontinuing Student, when they considered the possibility that they may learn a language later in their lives:

Oliver: There'd be no point in me learning another language... yet, I mean there might be down the track a bit but...

Rob: If it comes to a point where I do need it I will learn it, but, until then I don't see the point on learning it, as I said learning it then not remembering it and losing touch with that learning, and then having to relearn it again.

Rob's comment links to similar ones expressed by participants in Kohler and Curnow's (2007) study regarding lost learning, and again highlights the relevance of languages education to students. Furthermore, Kohler and Curnow (2007) also found that a significant majority of discontinuing students in their study indicated that they might study a language in the future, which is consistent with the findings from the focus groups of the present study. While there was no survey question assessing students' long term possible language study, overall 66% of participants indicated that they would like to be the kind of person who is able to speak a language well, suggesting that future language study could be a possibility for over half of the study's population. It is significant that in the focus group interviews, no Discontinuing Students spoke of there being any benefits to second language learning, while students from every other category did express perceptions of advantages. This suggests that students in this category do not perceive languages study to be relevant to them in any way. When some Discontinuing Students spoke of possible future L2 study, it was always in terms of needing a language for a specific purpose, such as travel or a career requirement, and therefore their prioritisation of L2 subjects was very low.

#### *5.2.2.3 Subject prioritisation*

While prioritising career subjects was a strong influential factor found in the present study, so was the prioritisation of other subjects in terms of importance and interest. Carr and Pauwels (2006) found that boys referred to languages being hard due to the requirement of sustained learning, as is the nature of second language acquisition, however they explained that this was often compromised when assignments or exams were due in other subjects. While participants in the present study valued their

languages education, they also prioritised other subjects above their L2 elective in terms of study time and focus. A survey of senior secondary students found that students who discontinued their languages study were partly motivated by Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) maximisation strategies (Rothman et al., 2014), which could have been a factor in the present study, as 43% of the total of participants agreed to some extent that it was difficult to score well in Year 12 language exams. Continuing students were more likely to agree that it was difficult to achieve good ATAR scores, with 65% of continuing students agreeing compared to 38% of discontinuing students. This comparison of language enrolment status is consistent with the findings of Rothman et al. (2014).

While other interests and subject priority can be a personal choice, they can also be considered a barrier to learning for students who are interested in L2s yet do not or cannot prioritise them high enough to actually enrol in an elective language subject. The next section explores preventative issues that students experience and which have come to light from the data.

### **5.3 Barriers for students not enrolled in an L2**

The present study aimed to investigate the motivational factors which affect students' enrolment in elective second language subjects. It also posed the question 'are there any barriers preventing students from enrolling in an elective L2?' because it was hypothesised that within the discontinuing student cohort, there may have been students who wanted to study an elective L2 but did not, and therefore the reasons why they did not were of interest. Quantitative and qualitative data both shed light on the barriers that students face when wanting to enrol in a second language elective

subject but being unable to do so, with 47% of discontinuing students disagreeing that the reason they were not enrolled in an elective L2 was because they did not want to be. This is consistent with findings from Rothman et al. (2014), in which 45% of senior secondary students not studying languages were at least moderately interested in doing so. The barriers found in the present study were both systemic barriers and personal preventions, which are organised into two overarching themes: ‘language choice’ and ‘timetable constraints’. Within these themes a range of sub themes are explored, which demonstrate the preventative issues experienced by students.

### **5.3.1 Language choice**

The theme ‘language choice’ emerged from data which referred to a lack of language subjects (few or none) offered at schools, students’ desired language not being available, and the general desire for a range of languages to be offered. This was the most prevalent theme from the focus group interviews, with the researcher leaving each research site with the strong impression that students were dissatisfied with their schools’ languages offerings. Zammit (1992) reported that 30% of participants in her study cited a major reason for discontinuing was that their desired language was not offered. This is consistent with participants’ responses in the present study, with 24% strongly agreeing that this was a reason for their discontinuation, with a total disagreement rate of 55%. Rothman et al. (2014) also reported lack of access to the preferred language as a perceived barrier by senior secondary students, with language availability cited as one of the main reasons for discontinuation. The topic of this barrier was also prominent in the open ended question at the conclusion of the present study’s survey, with eleven participants motivated to comment about their school not



offering the language they wanted to learn, or their wish that their school would offer a wider variety of languages. Three examples of the comments are:

Year 10 Male: I would be interested in learning a LOTE but I am uninterested in the languages that are offered.

Year 11 Female: I would have loved to learn Spanish but it was never an option.

Year 9 Male: I want to learn European languages but my school offers none.

Similar comments were also expressed in the focus group interviews, with a number of students stating that they wanted to learn a language, but the one they wanted was not offered at their school, and generally they were not interested in the ones that were available. This is consistent with findings from Lo Bianco and Aliani's (2013) study, which included focus group interviews with secondary students, in which a number of participants stated that they would prefer to learn a different language. This is also similar to findings from Schmidt's (2014) interviews with tertiary German learners. This barrier is demonstrated by Aaron, who stated "I dropped out of the other languages...they weren't the languages of my choice". This was the story of many students classified as Forced Discontinuing Students, although two continuing students, Paul and Alex, were both studying their non-preferred language. This suggests a strong interest in second languages and the possible inference that some students would continue their second language learning if they enjoyed it enough, despite it not being their desired L2. However, Paul and Alex's examples were very much in the minority, and instead the data displays a significant systemic barrier for

students who wish to enrol in an elective L2 but choose not to due to the unavailability of their desired language. This represents a huge challenge for schools, given the wide variety of languages in which students are interested. In regards to the desired language not being offered, a few students in Kohler and Curnow's (2007) study cited this as a reason for discontinuing their second language learning. While more than half of the participants in the present study indicated this as a reason, Kohler and Curnow's (2007) findings are on par with those of Zammit's (1992) and the present study, but on a less significant scale.

The barrier of language choice has been demonstrated to be a strong influential factor for participants of this study, and this is a systemic issue which students experienced. Additional systemic preventative issues relate to school timetabling structures, and these are explored in terms of how these impact students' subject decisions.

### **5.3.2 Timetable constraints**

Timetable constraints is an overarching theme which contains sub themes relating to systemic timetable structuring, which impacts on students' subject choices. Within this theme are the barriers that students experience due to the number of electives they are able to choose, which results in students needing to find room to fit in all the subjects that they need or want to enrol in, which thus leads to their prioritisation of subjects. At times this is a personal preference due to other interests, or a forced choice in terms of prerequisite subjects for future study or career pathways. The results from the present study are consistent with those of a number of other investigations into student second language enrolment.

Spence-Brown (2014) found that of the senior secondary students who wanted to study Japanese but could not, the main reason was being unable to fit the subject into their course. Considering the responses by all discontinuing students, a lack of room was ranked third as a major influence. In the present study, it was also ranked as the third most common reason with 63% of discontinuing students agreeing that this was an issue for them. Furthermore, in Spence-Brown's (2014) study, responses to an open ended question indicated that timetabling issues or the number of subjects that students could take were influencing factors, and students who were unsure of continuing cited a lack of room in their course as the main reason. This is also consistent with findings from the present study, with all of these reasons discussed as preventative issues in the focus group interviews. Interviewing teachers and other key stakeholders about students' reasons for discontinuation, de Kretser and Spence-Brown (2010) also found that a lack of room and timetable structuring were issues, along with course structure changes which resulted Year 12 students only studying four subjects. As language subjects are often students' fifth or sixth choice, de Kretser and Spence-Brown (2010) argued that languages were vulnerable when the amount of electives were limited, and this was the case in the present study for Kimberley, who explained "because with the way I worked things out with what I want to do it doesn't fit in, I don't *have* the space for it". In the present study's open ended survey question, a lack of room, timetable constraints and subject priority were all mentioned. The following response came from an anonymous Year 10 male student who appears to belong to the Forced Discontinuing Student category, as he explained that "I studied French for two years and would have considered continuing my study however the main reason for discontinuing the subject was that I could not fit it into my timetable".

From the survey data he provided he last studied a language in Year 8, therefore it is likely that one or two of his French years could have been mandatory. This demonstrates that students can be inspired to learn a second language after being exposed to it through mandatory learning, as well as the barriers that students experience once it becomes an elective subject and timetable constraints impede their learning desires.

Unfortunately, future language learning is often also prevented due to a lack of room or set courses, with a number of students in the focus groups indicating that they would like to study an elective L2 at senior secondary school or university, however they were unsure if this would be possible due to not having enough room on the timetable, or degrees not providing elective choices. Furthermore, students cited the time and effort it takes to learn a second language as another barrier, as current and future studies often came first as a priority with other subjects taking precedence. This factor was discussed previously in the theme ‘subject prioritisation’ (Section 5.2.2.3) as a motivation to discontinue study, however it also acts as a barrier for students who wish to study an elective L2 but are constrained by the number of subjects in which they are allowed to enrol. This is highlighted by Kimberley who explained that she would liked to have studied an elective L2, but “because there’s such a limited space for things to do, I just picked whatever I wanted to do more”. A similar comment was made by a Year 9 female in the open-ended response question of the survey: “I enjoyed learning a LOTE and would have liked to continue learning but I had to choose it as an elective and there were other subjects I wanted to do more”. These points are further demonstrated by Caleb when he explained that with only three electives, he would have studied a language last year if the school offered his desired

one, but “now I’m kind of trying to fit in the ones I want to do for the career path I’ve chosen”. The boost in language enrolments when students are able to study extra subjects is demonstrated by the state of Victoria, where students are able to complete six Year 12 level subjects by accelerating their studies and including these level subjects in Year 11 or earlier. As explained by de Kretser and Spence-Brown (2010), students are then able to continue their languages study in Year 12 as they have room for it within their course. Jordan, a New Discontinuing Student, explained that he was still interested in French despite not currently studying it, however it was just too hard to fit in around other subjects, especially with its high workload, and there were other subjects that he wanted to do more. This clearly provides an example of students who wish to learn a language but experience personal and structural barriers.

As previously discussed, subject priority is an important influencing factor affecting students’ enrolment in an elective second language, and when considered in conjunction with timetable constraints like lack of room and number of elective choice, subject priority becomes a barrier experienced by students who want to enrol in an L2 but need to prioritise other subjects. This can be due to a career focus, or the need to complete prerequisites for future studies, which is linked to Kalakoski and Nurmi’s (1998) finding that adolescent students’ explorations of their identity and future orientations in terms of education and career increased when students neared transitions, as did their commitment to future education. In the present study, a Year 10 female believed that “a lot of people do not study a LOTE because other subjects such as prerequisites are more of a priority”, a comment she shared in the open-ended survey question. This prioritisation leads to language subjects often getting relegated to the bottom of the subject preference list after subjects that align with their future

orientations. Spence-Brown (2014) found that the fourth highest rated reason for discontinuation was that the student had already decided that they would not continue in Year 12, thus there was ‘no point’ in continuing. This relates to Taylor and Marsden’s (2014) finding that secondary students determine their subject selections well before formally selecting them. Time and priorities both in and out of school were discussed by students, as Jordan’s response to the open-ended question shows:

I am interested in continuing with a second language but cannot fit it in around other subject choices as well as commitments in and out of school; however I am considering taking up learning of a LOTE again after I finish school if I have time.

This is also demonstrated by Lucy, who wished to continue her French study but stated that she would have no room in her future degree which had predetermined subjects, and that her busy lifestyle and out-of-school commitments left no time for personal language study. Students who participated in Moloney and Harbon’s (2015) study, which investigated the transition to tertiary language study, expressed their disappointment that their tertiary degree consisted of predetermined units which precluded languages study, a view which was shared by participants of the present study.

Systemic barriers such as timetabling also impact on students. This Year 9 female student used the open-ended survey question to vent her frustration: “I wanted to continue with my study but the classes ended!” and Patrick explained that he was unable to study two languages as they were timetabled simultaneously. Furthermore, an imposed minimum requirement of students in a subject often results in the subject not being offered due to a lack of enrolment, which Gould-Drakeley (2016, cited in

Munro, 2016) argued is “economic rationalism” (para. 17), as government schools often require 15 students. She further explained that she knew of situations where language teachers had 10 or 14 students keen to enrol, yet the subject was not offered as it did not reach the minimum student requirement (Gould-Drakeley 2016, cited in Munro, 2016). This creates a detrimental cycle, as students in the lower years perceive that there is no pathway to Year 12, thus they do not enrol in language subjects, and therefore as enrolments decline even less classes are offered (or instead year levels are combined) as schools perceive there to be a lack of interest (de Kretser & Spence-Brown, 2010). This is explained by Hayley when she commented in the survey that “this year a LOTE class or tutoring is not available for grade 9's or 10's as not enough people selected it as an elective class”. The lack of language subjects offered or the combination of classes was reported by de Kretser and Spence-Brown (2010) as a significant deterrent for students when considering their L2 enrolment. Students in the present study understood the reason for their year levels being combined, however most felt disadvantaged by it, such as Ella, who felt that the teacher focused more on the pre-tertiary cohort as they had their examinations, and Lucy, who commented that it was a hard situation. Students who are strongly motivated to study a language are able to overcome this situation, however as previous research has demonstrated, it can be a major deterrent for less motivated students.

This section regarding student barriers is summarised perfectly by Caleb, who was speaking on behalf of his focus group when he stated “well I think that we can all agree that we would like to learn a language but we just don't” adding that “time, the number of electives we can have and what language we have” were all barriers to learning. Caleb's comment captures the general feeling that the researcher obtained

from a significant number of students in the focus groups, who were then classified as Forced Discontinuing Students, which is a key finding of the present study. Another key finding is the prominence of Ideal L2 Selves, applying to both continuing and discontinuing students. The next section explores this theme along with two others, with regards to students' L2 attitudes.

## **5.4 Students' attitudes towards second language learning**

The final section of the Discussion Chapter explores three main themes which are not motivational factors regarding L2 enrolment, but which are of interest in terms of being significant findings of the present study. These three themes have been classified as students' attitudes towards second language learning. First, the concept of the Ideal L2 Self is examined in relation to continuing and discontinuing students. This is followed by the perception of gender stereotyping in regards to languages, and finally the factor 'peer influence' is discussed due to its lack of consistency with the findings of previous studies.

### **5.4.1 Ideal L2 Self**

Dörnyei's (2005) L2MSS was designed to assess students' motivations for studying a second language. However, of the discontinuing students in the present study, 47% disagreed that the reason they did not enrol in an elective L2 subject was because they did not want to learn a language. The findings of the present study revealed that both continuing and discontinuing students displayed levels of an Ideal L2 Self, suggesting that Dörnyei's (2005) Ideal L2 Self construct can be applied to students who are not learning a second language. This is particularly relevant for Forced Discontinuing



Students who wished to be studying an elective L2 at school but were not, but also applied to Discontinuing Students who exhibited part of an Ideal L2 Self. As Figure 5.5 shows, 38% of students who did not want to study a second language *could* imagine themselves able to speak a second language, and 39% *wanted* to be the kind of person who speaks a language well.

		I did NOT want to study a LOTE.		I did NOT like learning a LOTE.		I did NOT like the LOTE class.	
		Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree
I can imagine myself as someone who is able to speak a LOTE.	Disagree	33%	62%	36%	64%	41%	57%
	Agree	67%	38%	64%	36%	59%	43%
I want to be the kind of person that speaks a LOTE well.	Disagree	21%	61%	24%	65%	30%	56%
	Agree	79%	39%	76%	35%	70%	44%

*Figure 5.5:* Cross tabulation of discontinuing students' reasons for discontinuation compared to their responses to the Ideal L2 Self statements

Examining the cross tabulation (Figure 5.5) further, it can be seen that comparing responses to the three reasons for L2 discontinuation against the two Ideal L2 Self statements reveals that between 35 and 44% of Discontinuing Students agreed to some extent with the two Ideal L2 Self statements of wanting to be and imagining themselves as able L2 users. It needs to be considered that students' interpretation of the statement 'I did not want to study a LOTE' is unknown, and while the response could indicate a pure desire to not want to, there could be other reasons influencing this response such as the preference of other subjects, thus resulting in not wanting to study a language. Discontinuing Students displayed Ideal L2 Selves to some extent in the focus group interviews when proposing that they may learn a second language in the future, and then use it to travel. This was demonstrated by Penny, who suggested

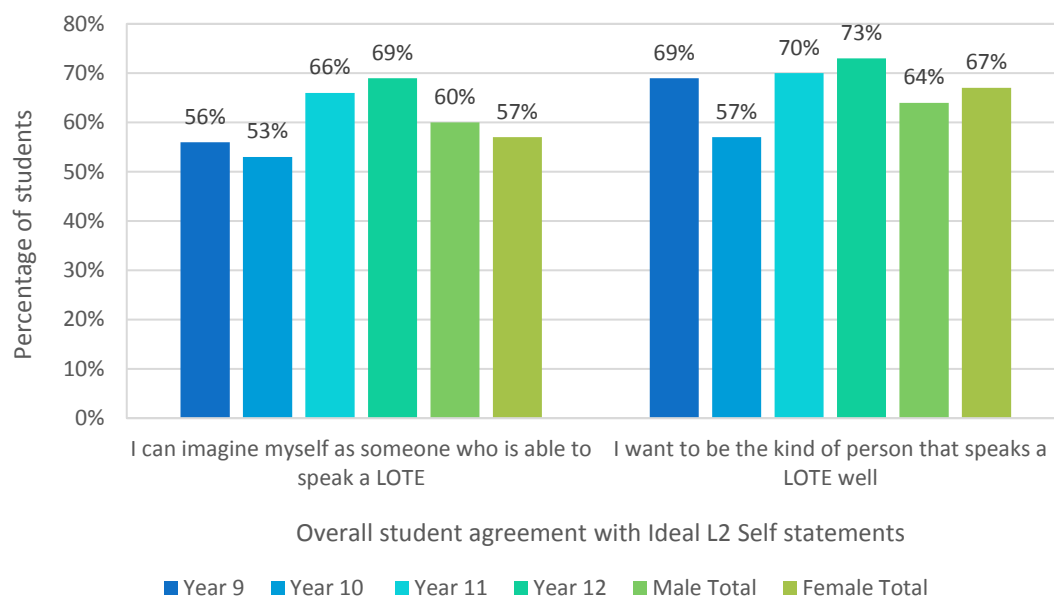
that she may begin elective second language learning in senior secondary school, then travel to the country of her chosen language.

Interestingly, while travel was one of the equal most prevalent reasons for students to continue their second language learning, students who discontinued their languages education also spoke of the desire to use language skills when travelling, and related future language learning to prospective travel. Like the Continuing Students, students who had discontinued their learning discussed visions of themselves using a language when travelling, thus indicating that they had developed to some extent an Ideal L2 Self despite not studying a language and thus not taking steps to reduce the discrepancy between their current and future selves. For example, Bec was a Discontinuing Student, but thought that she could possibly learn a language in the future and then travel to that country. This suggests a dormant self guide, whereby students have a vision of their Ideal L2 Self, however the context is not appropriate for them to begin following their self guide and instead it is held in a static position until an appropriate time to take action. This is especially applicable to Forced Discontinuing Students, who demonstrated strong Ideal L2 Selves and wanted to learn a second language and use it whilst travelling, however being unable to enrol in an elective L2 subject delayed the guidance of their future self. This applies to students such as Ally, a Forced Discontinuing Student, who really wanted to learn French and travel to France. The language was not offered at her school, thus her plans were to enrol in an elective French class at senior secondary school. Ally chose to comment on this lack of language in the open-ended final survey question: “I wish the LOTE that I wanted to learn was offered at my school. I think more public schools should have larger variety of LOTEs, allowing students to learn a language they

enjoy”. She echoed similar statements during her focus group interview, while also conceding that she recognised the difficulty of schools actually being able to offer more languages, especially at her school which only had three students enrolled in an elective L2. This demonstrates the tension between student desires and language availability, and the practicality of school subject offerings.

The Continuing and Discontinuing responses have been combined to show the overall agreement levels with two Ideal L2 Self statements, organised by Year level and gender (see Figure 5.6). Students in higher Year levels demonstrated a more positive response to the statement “I can imagine myself as someone who is able to speak a LOTE”, which may suggest that they are more confident in imagining an Ideal L2 Self as they have spent more time learning a second language, or may also or instead suggest that younger students are still developing their vision of an Ideal L2 Self (Kormos & Csizer, 2008). Higher agreement response rates were also provided by Year 11 and 12 students for the second statement, however Year 9 students were almost equal with the Year 11 students. It could be inferred that a ‘want’ is much easier to consider than an image of one’s self, and therefore more easily accessible by younger students. Gender appeared uninfluential, with only a three percent difference between statement responses, except for the Year 10 students, which was a four percent difference. Overall, the male and female totals only differed by three percent, with the higher gender response transposed for each statement. These figures therefore suggest that gender was not an important factor when considering students’ Ideal L2 Self profiles.

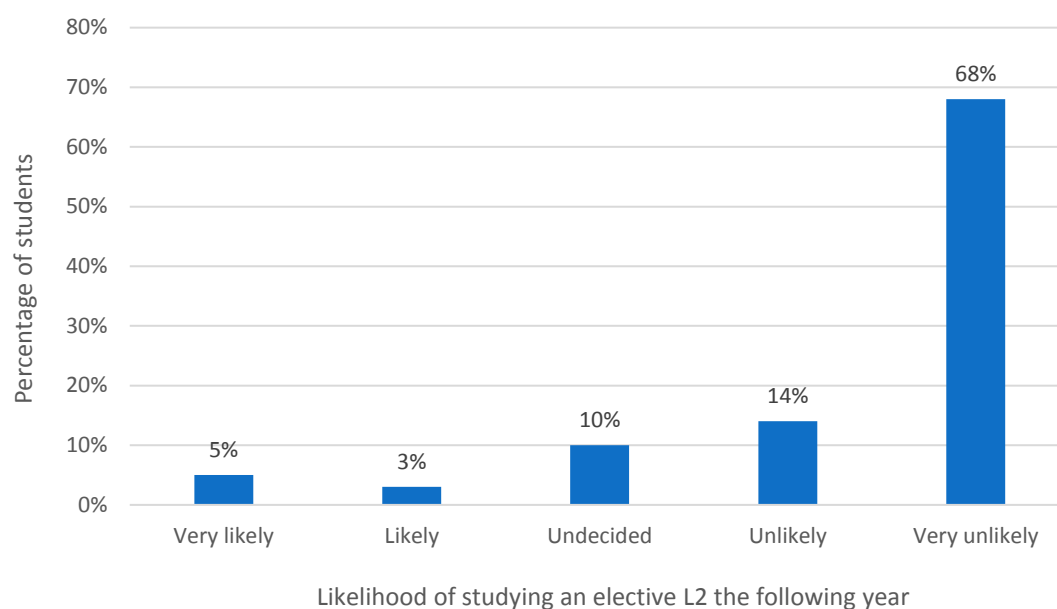
When asked to consider how likely they were to study an elective second language the following year, the majority of discontinuing students indicated that they



*Figure 5.6: Overall student agreement with Ideal L2 Self statements according to Year level and gender*

were very unlikely to do so (68%). In comparison, in Spence-Brown's (2014) study, 25.4% of senior secondary Japanese discontinuing students indicated that they may study the subject in the future, with 41.8% indicating 'maybe'. In the present study, only five percent and three percent responded very likely or likely respectively, while 10% were undecided (see Figure 5.7). However, it must be taken into account that the present study clearly stated the following year, whereas Spence-Brown's (2014) only referred to 'the future' which allows for much more possibility. Had the present study used her wording, it is likely that more students would have responded 'likely' or 'very likely' as this would have allowed for consideration of senior secondary and tertiary study, whereas the barriers that were preventing some students in their current year were likely to be the same ones preventing them in the following year. While the indication of student elective L2 study in the following year is small, and contrasts with the higher figures recorded by Spence-Brown (2014), it indicates that there are

students within the cohort of discontinuing students who wish to take up second language learning, especially when considering the possibility of including undecided students in the figures for future learning.



*Figure 5.7:* Discontinuing students' likelihood of studying an elective L2 the following year

While the Ideal L2 Self dimension of the L2MSS construct was found to be prominent in the present study, the Ought-to L2 Self dimension did not appear to be an influential factor affecting students' L2 elective enrolments.

#### 5.4.2 Ought to L2 Self

Dörnyei's (2005) concept of the Ought-to L2 Self refers to the self that one feels they should be to meet external expectations or avoid negative outcomes. Some research studies, such as Csizér and Kormos (2009) and Taguchi, Magid, and Papi (2009) found that learners were influenced by factors relating to the Ought-to L2 Self, however these, like many studies, were investigating the learning of English. Due to

the increasing global dominance of English, motivations to learn this language differ from the motivations to learn others, with strong communication and career influences. For example, Taguchi et al. (2009) found that Chinese and Iranian learners of English felt obligated to learn so that they had increased employment and promotion opportunities, which in turn enhanced their socio-economic status, allowed them to further support their families, and created better marriage prospects. In the present study, the Ought-to L2 Self component was found to have little influence on students' motivations for choosing an elective L2. Of the five statements regarding an Ought-to L2 Self, responses from both continuing and discontinuing students indicated large levels of disagreement for all except two statements for the continuing students. The statement 'studying a LOTE is important to me because an educated person is supposed to be able to speak a second language' received 39% of agreement to some extent by continuing students, while the statement 'I feel that I should keep studying a LOTE because I have already spent years learning it' received agreement levels of 74% (see Figure 5.8). The first statement aligns with Taguchi et al.'s (2009) finding that learners study English to increase their socio-economic status and earn respect and prestige for their family, as learners in the present study indicated their desire to be perceived by society as well-educated. The second statement received much stronger agreement, with nearly three quarters of students studying an L2 believing that they should continue their studies so as not to waste previous years of learning. Patrick was the only focus group participant who spoke of this perception, and as a Forced Discontinuing Student he was referring to his desire to return to learning Chinese, explaining that "I wouldn't want to drop it now... it would be a shame" after five years of study. The only other focus group participant to indicated

motivations relating to an Ought-to L2 Self was George. Already fluent in German from being raised bilingual, he was required to study Year 11 German as a prerequisite to enrolling in the High Achiever Program (HAP) in Year 12. This pathway allowed George a head start on his university studies, as the program enables students to study first year language units through the University of Tasmania. Systemic structures placed external requirement on George to enrol in the Year 11 German subject, clearly constituting an Ought-to L2 Self in terms of a promotion focus, as it allowed him to get to his goal of enrolling in the HAP.

		Elective LOTE	
		Yes	No
Learning a LOTE is necessary because people surrounding me expect me to.	Disagree	87%	91%
	Agree	13%	9%
If I fail to study a LOTE I will be letting other people down.	Disagree	76%	88%
	Agree	24%	12%
I believe that learning a LOTE is important because the people that I respect think that I should.	Disagree	74%	83%
	Agree	26%	17%
Studying a LOTE is important to me because an educated person is supposed to be able to speak an L2.	Disagree	61%	83%
	Agree	39%	17%
I feel that I should keep studying a LOTE because I have already spent years learning it.	Disagree	26%	76%
	Agree	74%	24%

*Figure 5.8: Students' responses to the Ought-to L2 Self statements*

While only two students referred to specific Ought to L2 Self motivations, at times the line between the Ideal L2 Self and the Ought-to L2 Self can be a little blurred. Three students in the focus groups, Kurt, Lucy and Ella, spoke of needing a second language for their future career aspirations:

Kurt: There was one thing that I was introduced to that I would be interested working as, and I need to speak Portuguese though to do that.

Lucy: There's five languages and you need to have at least two of them, fluent.

Ella: Languages are my main gateway to a job because I want to be a language teacher.

While these three students had chosen these careers and wanted to be studying a second language, it could be argued that part of them was made up of an Ought-to L2 Self as they were required to have a second language (or additional languages) for their careers, thus they felt some external pressure. This can be described as internal instrumental motivation within the Ideal L2 Self, but it is also possible that it crosses over into the Ought-to L2 Self somewhat. This is referred to by Csizer and Dörnyei (2005) as the extent of internalisation of an instrumental Ought-to promotion. The extrinsic nature of the instrumental motivation means that it can either be referenced to an Ideal or an Ought-to L2 Self, and the determining factor is how internalised the learner makes the extrinsic factor. As discussed in Section 5.1.1, instrumentality reasons regarding long term goals such as careers can be classified in the Ideal L2 Self component, as these are internalised future goals. However, for these three students discussing their future careers involving second language learning, it depends to what extent they have internalised these reasons for study. Therefore, it cannot be determined that Kurt, Lucy and Ella were not influenced at least in some part by an Ought-to L2 Self.

Overall, the Ought-to L2 Self component did not emerge as a prominent factor influencing students' elective L2 enrolment decisions. Continuing students agreed that they believed an educated person has second language skills and felt that they ought to continue studying a language due to the previous years they had spent learning it,



but it is unclear to what extent this motivated them to continue their elective L2 enrolment. There was very little difference between genders for each statement, with more males agreeing than females for four of the five statements, although only by two to six percent. This suggests that gender is not an influential factor on Ought-to L2 Selves, and this is consistent with the overall findings of the study, which found gender did not impact on motivation to continue or discontinue an elective L2, nor did students perceive language subjects to be affected by gender stereotyping.

### **5.4.3 Gender**

Boys and languages is a well-researched relationship, as there are a number of reports lamenting boys' lack of motivation for second language learning, along with their lower performances in the subject compared to girls (Carr, 2002; Carr & Pauwels, 2006; Pavy, 2006; Williams, Burden & Lanvers, 2002). While the present study did not investigate learners' language aptitude, from the previous literature it was deemed important to investigate the situation of boys and second language learning in the Tasmanian context. While previous studies have found that there is no gender difference in aptitude, the majority have found a lack of motivation from males, thus it was rather surprising, but very welcome, to find that in Tasmania, neither males nor females display any attitudes of language subject gender stereotyping. According to Schmenk (2004) there are widespread assumptions about the dominance of females in second language learning contexts, with common beliefs that females are more proficient and motivated than their male counterparts, thus making second language subjects a feminine domain. This is confirmed by a number of studies and articles (Carr, 2002; Carr and Pauwels, 2005; Davies, 2004; Hajdu, 2005; Pavy, 2006; Ren,

2009) which investigate males' relationships with languages, especially in terms of their enrolment, attitudes towards, and levels of achievement in learning a second language at school. Male students are often far outnumbered by females in languages subjects, and as the present study aimed to understand students' motivations for choosing or not choosing to enrol in an elective second language subject at school, it was deemed relevant to explore this apparent gender divide and determine if subject stereotyping was an influential factor in students' choices.

There was an even response rate overall to the survey from males and females, and surprisingly the gender divide between continuing and discontinuing students was also very equal: 21% of students (24% male, 21% female) were enrolled in an elective LOTE compared to 79% (76% male, 79% female) who were not. This suggests that gender does not impact on enrolment rates in second language subjects, as well as contrasting with the literature that outlines the lack of motivation from males to enrol in an elective L2. Results from Carr and Pauwels (2006) and Kissau (2006) have found students to perceive L2 learning as 'girly' or effeminate respectively, but at least 78% of participants in the present study disagreed with the three statements regarding gendered subjects. Indeed, students felt very strongly about this topic, with 93% of participants disagreeing to some extent that languages is 'a girl's area of study'. This is consistent with Zammit's (1992) findings, in which 97% of respondents indicated levels of disagreement. In the present study, the responses from both male and female students were equal, with 94% of each gender disagreeing with the statement. Interestingly, 91% of continuing students disagreed compared to 94% of the discontinuing students, although the difference is so minor it is unlikely to indicate differing perceptions between them (see Figure 5.9). This finding differs

from the above studies, but is consistent with the attitudes conveyed by participants in Hajdu's (2005) study, which also found that male and female students did not consider there to be any gender differences regarding second language learning, with the belief that both genders were equally able to succeed with languages. This is also consistent with findings from Kissau, Quach and Wang, (2009), Carr and Pauwels (2006), Kissau and Salsas (2013), and MacCall (2011). Research conducted by Wucherer and Reiterer (2016) found that males and females both succeeded in language learning, but in different areas.

		Elective LOTE	
		Yes	No
LOTE is a girls' area of study.	Disagree	91%	94%
	Agree	9%	6%
Girls are more interested than boys in studying a LOTE.	Disagree	68%	80%
	Agree	32%	20%
Girls are more interested than boys in studying mathematics.	Disagree	88%	88%
	Agree	12%	12%

*Figure 5.9:* Student responses to the statements regarding languages as a gendered subject

In the present study, the majority of replies (both quantitative and qualitative) were overwhelmingly negative regarding students' beliefs that second language subjects were 'a girl's subject'. Only two students who participated in the focus groups, Peter and Vincent, referred to the possibility that females were more interested in language learning. Peter commented from his own experiences in an elective second language class that there were more females than males, believing that girls were more interested than males who 'drop' it. Vincent suggested that girls may

be more interested in certain languages, citing some languages could be perceived as being romantic (French) compared to ones that appear more practical (Asian languages) and that this could influence students' decisions. This links to a similar suggestion made by Dörnyei, Csizér, and Németh (2006), who investigated Hungarian students' perceptions of five target languages prior to them choosing their secondary school language subject. They found that while English was popular among all students, there was a gender difference between German, Italian and French, with Dörnyei et al. (2006) suggesting that this could be because German is perceived to be more masculine while the other two are perceived as feminine. In comparison to these suggestions, there was resounding disagreement from the remainder of students who were involved in the focus groups in the present study. Some students stated that they were unaware that languages were considered gendered, while others argued that they would never judge their peers based on subject choice in terms of whether they were perceived as gendered subjects. Chelsea believed that in her language class, in terms of the gender distribution, "I think it's half and half nearly, I'm not sure, it was probably more boys". Carr and Pauwels (2006) found that languages were considered by both males and females to be a 'girly' subject which 'cool' boys don't do, however in the present study Ben commented that "there's a few jocks in our class" and Ian explained "I've got sports science and Chinese", suggesting that although he was doing a language he was also interested in what may be stereotypically masculine subjects. Both boys were rejecting the notion that only certain types of boys do languages, as has been the perception expressed in previous studies such as Carr and Pauwels' (2005). In the present study the gender stereotype was further rejected with the positive response to the statement that anyone can learn a language (87% of

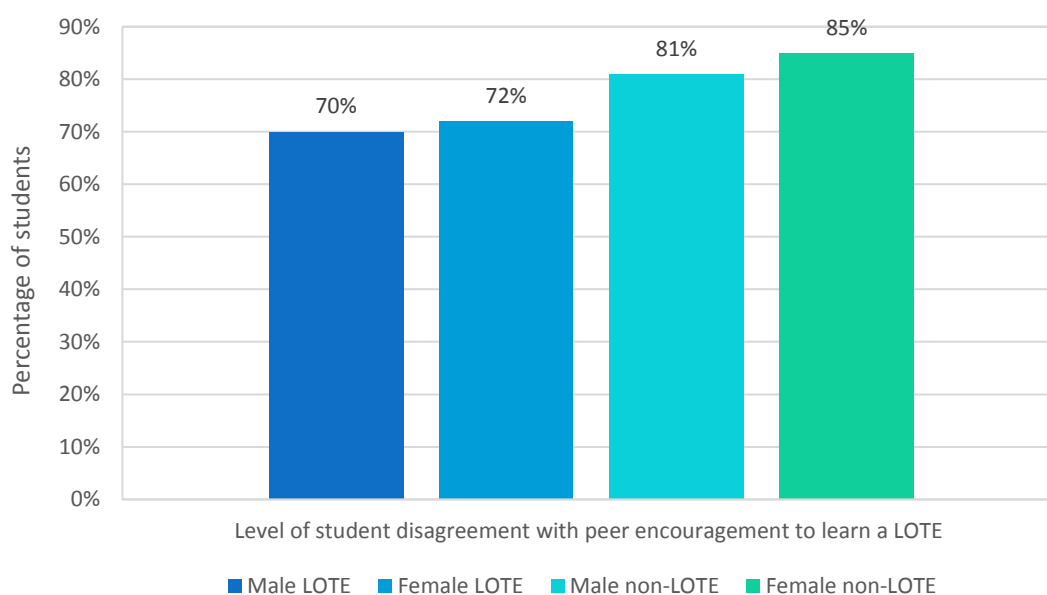
participants agreed to some extent). This suggests that students did not believe gender or ability to be factors in second language acquisition, with strong responses of disagreement to the idea of languages being a gendered subject making this a significant finding compared to the majority of previous studies.

While students were not influenced in their enrolment decisions by gendered subject stereotyping, it was expected from the results of previous studies that friends and peers would be an influential factor on students' subject choice. However, this was not cited as a motivational factor for enrolment by the participants in the present study, and this also reveals a significant difference compared to other findings.

#### **5.4.4 Peer influence**

The influence of friends and peers has been cited as a motivating factor when students consider their subject choices. However, it is a significant finding of the present study that peers were not a motivational influence. Considered independently of other reasons for continuation, with 65% of student agreement, peer influence appears to be a motivating factor. However, in comparison to other factors, it ranked 13th out of 17 reasons, thus cited by students as the fifth least important reason for continuing their languages studies. This is in comparison to findings by Ren (2009) and Hajdu (2005) where the factor 'friends' was ranked in the middle in terms of influencing factors. However, it is consistent with findings from Zammit's (1992) study, with more than three quarters of participants disagreeing that their friends had encouraged them to study a second language. In the present study, when discussing external influences such as parents, teachers and peers, students who participated in the focus groups explained that they did not choose a language subject because their friends were

enrolling in it, nor were they influenced by their peers' opinions. This is in contrast to findings by Kohler and Curnow (2007), in which several students mentioned that the presence of friends in the language class was an influential factor. In the present study, a reason for this not being cited as an influential reason was provided by students at one research site, who believed that students at their school were non-discriminatory and therefore would not bully peers for their subject choice. It was found that 66% of continuing students disagreed that their peers had encouraged them to study a second language, while 70% disagreed to some extent that their friends believed Australians should learn a second language. The gender breakdown for the former statement is shown in Figure 5.10 for both continuing and discontinuing students.



*Figure 5.10:* Level of disagreement with the statement 'my school friends encouraged me to a LOTE'

The finding that peers were not an influential factor for students' elective L2 enrolment choice was significant due to the contrast with findings of previous studies,

however it did align with the finding from Zammit's (1992) study. While in the present study, friends were cited as a continuing reason by more than half of the students enrolled in an elective, it was not a major motivational factor, and students in the focus groups all disagreed that they were influenced by their peers. This suggests that peers are part of the combination of reasons that students choose an elective L2 subject, however friends are not a significant motivating factor on their own.

## 5.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has discussed the motivational factors that encourage and discourage students to continue their languages education once it becomes non-compulsory, along with the barriers that prevent willing students from enrolling in an elective L2. The first seven continuation reasons were all based on intrinsic interest and positive experiences, and this is consistent with the findings of Spence-Brown (2014) and Kohler and Curnow (2007), with both studies suggesting that students are more motivated by intrinsic than instrumental reasons such as career benefits or practical advantages. The main reasons that students discontinue their L2 studies are negative previous experiences, and a lack of interest and relevance in regards to languages. A significant cohort of students wished to learn a second language, but were prevented from doing so by systemic and personal barriers including language availability, timetabling structures and subject prioritisation. Overall, the findings of the present study have largely aligned with those of previous ones, except in regards to gendered subject perceptions and peer influence. It was found that both students who were and were not enrolled in a language exhibited degrees of an Ideal L2 Self, and the presence of an Ought-to L2 Self was rare for participants in the present study. The

final conclusions of the study are made in the following chapter, and include future recommendations.



## Chapter 6

# Conclusion

The purpose of this final chapter is to revisit and reflect on the present study's aims, methods and key findings, before presenting the conclusions and recommendations. First, a summary of the study is provided, outlining the research design, methods, limitations and key findings. Next, the four research questions of the study are addressed, with the conclusions drawn from the study's findings. Finally, recommendations are made for future investigations based on the insights gained from the present study's findings.

### 6.1 Summary of the study

Second language learning motivation is a strong research area within the field of second language acquisition (SLA). Understanding why learners choose to study a second language, and the range of factors which affect this decision, enables teachers, schools, and policy makers to provide an effective languages education that meets the needs of all learners. Languages are a key learning area within the National Curriculum, and feature in the framework for global education. Language learning encourages appreciation and acceptance of diversity; develops the understanding that languages are systems, which therefore enhances native language literacy skills; and is intimately linked to culture, which encourages understanding of different views and customs (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA],

2014a; Liddicoat, 2001; Liddicoat, 2002; Reder et al., 2013). Despite the value of second language learning, languages education in Australia is experiencing an enrolment decline in the post-compulsory years. The rise of English as a global language gives students the false perception that English is enough (Liddicoat, 2002), leading to the belief that L2 learning is irrelevant, however as Tinsley and Board (2013) argued, “it is not good enough to only be able to communicate in English – we know that more than 70% of the world’s population does not speak English!” (para. 9). A lack of both relevance and interest from students is primarily the assumed cause for the enrolment decline, however this is a simple perception which does not consider the range of influences which affect students’ enrolment. Investigating motivations to learn English as a second language is dominant in the SLA field, as are studies which focus on the secondary years of schooling (Boo, Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015), therefore the present study aimed to address this gap and investigate the motivational influences affecting elective L2 enrolment in Years 9 to 12 with participants who had English as a native language. This inquiry was guided by the following research questions:

RQ 1 What factors influence students’ enrolment decisions when considering elective second language subjects?

RQ 2 Are there any barriers which prevent students from enrolling in an elective second language subject?

RQ 3 How does the L2 Motivational Self System apply in the Tasmanian context?

RQ 4 Can the L2 Motivational Self System be applied to students who are not studying a second language?

In the aim of answering these questions, the study was designed within the postpositivist and constructivist paradigms, using mixed methods as the methodological approach.

### **6.1.1 Summary of methods**

Elective second language figures show that the majority of Australian students do not continue their languages education past the compulsory years. Investigating the reasons for students' elective L2 enrolment decisions aimed to develop an understanding of this phenomenon. This investigation was conducted in Tasmania, with a mixed methods design which allowed for both quantitative and qualitative data to be collected to provide a rich description of students' decisions. Students in Years 9 to 12 were selected as the population, as these are the years that students are able to select elective subjects and languages are no longer compulsory. An invitation to participate in the study was sent to all schools in Tasmania, and students' participation was voluntary. The study used explanatory design, with a state wide survey followed by focus group interviews. Survey data developed an overview of students' attitudes to and perceptions of second language learning, and informed the structure of the focus group interviews. There were eight focus groups conducted at schools across the state, with a mix of Year levels, genders and students who were and were not enrolled in an elective L2. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics, and thematic analysis techniques. Students were classified into profiles based on their commitment to second language learning and their enrolment status. The five categories, as initially informed by Martin and Jansen (2012), were: Continuing Students, Undecided Students, Forced Discontinuing Students, New

Discontinuing Students, and Discontinuing Students. Furthermore, data were analysed according to Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS), which led to key findings of the study.

### 6.1.2 Summary of findings

A number of significant findings emerged from the analysis of data.

- There were a significant cohort of students who wish to be studying an elective L2 but were not. This was a common theme which emerged from the focus group interviews, and survey data revealed that of the total participants not enrolled in an elective L2 at school, 48% *disagreed* with the reason that this was because they did not like it, while 55% *agreed* that the language they wanted to study was not offered.
- A strong perception gained by the researcher from the focus group interviews was that students who were not enrolled in an elective L2 still valued second language learning despite the preventative barriers that they experienced.
- Subject prioritisation was a major factor influencing elective L2 enrolment, both for career and future study priority, as well as stronger interests in other elective subjects.
- Dörnyei's (2005) concept of the Ideal L2 Self could be applied to students who were not currently studying a second language.

- The results of the present study confirmed those of previous studies which found that a lack of interest and perceived irrelevance of L2s was a strong factor influencing discontinuation.
- Intrinsic and internal instrumental motivations were dominant for continued second language learning, as opposed to external instrumental reasons.
- High interest, enjoyment and past positive experiences were all strong motivating factors which influenced continuation.
- Teacher enthusiasm was a strong motivating factor to continue elective L2 study.
- The desire to travel and be able to use a language effectively while doing so was a top reason for continuation. It was also a motivating factor for students who were not studying an elective language but wished to be. Even students who were not interested in L2 learning recognised the benefits of being able to travel with language skills, and suggested that this may be a motivational factor to learn an L2 if they were to travel.

These findings have led to the following conclusions being drawn as they relate to each of the study's research questions.

## **6.2 Conclusions relating to RQ1**

*What factors influence students' enrolment decisions when considering elective second language subjects?*

Similar to Spence-Brown (2014), it was found in the present study that

students' enrolment decisions were influenced by a combination of factors which led to complex, multifaceted reasons for continuing or discontinuing. Intrinsic and internal motivations such as liking the class and teacher, enjoying learning, travel, communication, and an interest in language and culture were the main reasons that students continued with elective L2 study. These range of factors were found in other studies (Hajdu, 2005; Kohler and Curnow, 2007; Moloney and Harbon, 2015; Ren, 2009; Rothman, Zhao and Lonsdale, 2014; Schmidt, 2011; Spence-Brown, 2014). The present study found that there were three top reasons for continuation of L2 studies, which all received an agreement response of 95%, and these were: the desire to study a second language; liking the language teacher; and the desire to use languages during travel. The survey results indicated that the top reason for discontinuation was that students believed that they could use English if they went overseas, followed by future studies not requiring an L2, and not being able to fit an elective L2 into their course of study. For discontinuing students who were interested in second language learning, barriers to study such as timetabling structures, lack of room in their course, unavailability of preferred language, subject priority or prerequisites, or other interests being prioritised, all resulted in discontinuation, which confirmed the findings of previous studies (Kohler and Curnow, 2007; Lo Bianco & Aliani, 2013; Rothman et al., 2014; Zammit, 1992). Students who had chosen to discontinue as they had no desire to study an elective L2 cited a lack of interest and no perceived relevance as the main reasons for their decisions, with negative previous experiences also influencing this choice, which is consistent with findings from de Kretser and Spence-Brown (2010), Kohler and Curnow (2007), Lo Bianco and Aliani (2013), Ren (2009), and Spence-Brown (2014). Both students who were enrolled in an elective second

language, and students who wished to be enrolled but were not, exhibited Ideal L2 Selves when explaining their reasons for wanting to study an L2. These students identified future selves in relation to language proficiency for travel, career, future study, and communication. Communicating in their second language was a strong feature in most of these visions, such as working overseas or travelling, instead of purely the material benefits such as increased employability with language skills. This is an important finding for language teachers when considering their lesson content.

In regards to the conclusions relating to RQ1, a final implication of the present study is that these findings could be applied to any elective subject, with similar motivational influences and barriers to learning which affect student enrolment. Exploring students' motivations to enrol in any elective subject would allow stakeholders to further understand why students do or do not enrol in other subjects.

In summary, the conclusion drawn from the findings of the present study in relation to the factors that influence students' elective L2 enrolment choices is that a complex combination of reasons affect their decisions. Approximately half of the discontinuing students indicated that they liked L2 learning and wanted to study an L2 subject. This suggests that a significant number of students are not enrolling due to a lack of interest or enjoyment in learning a second language, disproving the assumption that a lack of interest is the cause for enrolment declines in elective L2 subjects. For around half of the present study's participants not enrolled in an L2 subject, the main reasons that they discontinued was a lack of interest and relevance, while the other half of this cohort experienced barriers which prevented them from enrolling. The main reasons that students did continue their languages education were intrinsic and internal instrumental motivations. It was found that students' Ideal L2

Selves were strong motivators if they want to study a second language regardless of whether or not they were enrolled in an elective language subject. This finding allows a specific target for encouraging second language uptake and addressing the issues that prevent keen students from enrolling. Understanding these Ideal L2 Self motivational factors enables teachers to address them in their content delivery to sustain students' motivation to study. Nearly half of the discontinuing students in this study wished to be studying an L2, therefore recognising that this cohort exists ought to encourage stakeholders to readdress their supply and demand situation regarding the provision of languages subjects in schools. Furthermore, measures can be taken to improve the perception of languages education and target students who believe an L2 to be irrelevant to their future lives. These actions ought to enable and encourage more students to choose an L2 as an elective subject, which would boost enrolment figures and possibly begin to affect the 'English is enough' monolingual mindset that is firmly entrenched into Australia's culture.

### **6.3 Conclusions relating to RQ2**

*Are there any barriers which prevent students from enrolling in an elective second language subject?*

The enrolment decline in post compulsory second language subjects is often perceived to be a lack of interest from students. It was hypothesised in the present study that there would be some students who desired to enrol in an elective L2 subject but were unable to do so, which has been found by previous studies (Kohler and Curnow, 2007; Lo Bianco & Aliani, 2013; Rothman et al., 2014; Zammit, 1992). In relation to this hypothesis, the findings from the present study confirmed those of



previous studies, and indicated that participants experienced a range of barriers to their learning, both systemic and personal. These participants were classified as Forced Discontinuing Students, as they had high motivation to study an elective L2 subject at school, however were not enrolled in one. This directly contrasts with the perception that a lack of interest is the reason for enrolment declines. The survey results revealed that of all the students who were not enrolled in an elective L2 subject, almost half (48%) disagreed that this was because they did not want to be studying one. In support of this finding, it was revealed that 56% of discontinuing students disagreed with the reason that they had disliked learning an L2, while 68% disagreed that it was because they would never have the opportunity to use an L2. Furthermore, of the 37 focus group participants, 10 were classified as Forced Discontinuing Students, which is just over a quarter of participants who were not enrolled in an L2 subject but wanted to be. This directly contradicts the perception that overall, students who discontinue their languages education do so due to a lack of interest or relevance.

Systemic and personal barriers were included in the discontinuing students' survey section regarding influential factors affecting enrolment decisions. The most prominent systemic barrier, with 65% agreement, was the lack of room regarding the amount of subjects in which students could enrol in each year, which is directly linked to the personal barrier of subject prioritisation. Many students indicated that they believed that it was more important to choose subjects that were related to their careers or future study, and at times these were prerequisite subjects that took the place of a desired language subject. Additionally, stronger interests than languages took subject choice precedence. Another very prevalent barrier, with 55% agreement,

was that discontinuing students' desired language was not offered at their school. This is 25% higher than the agreement rate in Zammit's (1992) findings, confirming that this is a prevalent issue more commonly experienced by today's students. This may suggest the impact of a systemic change regarding language choice and availability, as participants in the focus groups appeared to have more demand for European rather than Asian languages. Students in the present study experienced timetable issues, with 50% indicating that an L2 subject clashed on their timetable with subjects that they preferred, while 63% responded that they could not fit an L2 into their course of study. This is concurrent with findings from de Kretser and Spence-Brown (2010) and Spence-Brown (2014). Although Forced Discontinuing Students exhibited Ideal L2 Selves as they wished to be learning an L2, Dörnyei's (2005) L2MSS did not apply to the context of students who experienced barriers and therefore was not useful in developing an understanding of the situation. This issue is further discussed in the conclusions relating to research questions three and four.

In summary, the findings of the present study indicate that a significant cohort of students in Years 9 to 12 were prevented from studying a second language elective subject at school by a range of systemic and personal barriers. The conclusion drawn from this finding is that the perception that a lack of student interest in elective L2s is incorrect, and within the cohort of discontinuing students are a group who wish to be continuing but are unable to do so due to a range of barriers.

## 6.4 Conclusions relating to RQ3

*How does the L2 Motivational Self System apply in the Tasmanian context?*

The results from the present study indicate that the L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS) can be successfully and effectively applied to the Tasmanian context in regards to Year 9 to 12 students' motivations for second language learning.

Continuing students exhibited strong Ideal L2 Selves which appeared to provide motivation for them to continue their elective L2 studies. A number of Continuing Students expressed their desires to be able to communicate with native speakers, either with friends or family who spoke the target L2 or during overseas trips for travel or work purposes. Participants in the focus groups spoke of their visions of themselves as successful L2 users when prompted about the concept. Some Continuing Students had future careers that involved second language use or they could clearly recognise the advantage of second language skills in their careers. This further enhanced their visions of their Ideal L2 Selves as they could envision L2 use within their careers, which are a strong aspect of students' future lives as they are focussed on career pathways and what they wish to do once leaving school. This is important as understanding that students develop Ideal L2 Selves, which provide strong motivators for them to study an L2, enables stakeholders to nurture these selves and encourage continued elective L2 study. Recognising the reasons why students are enrolled in L2 classes allows teachers to deliver more focused and appropriate lesson content, understand what motivates students to learn, and how they can enhance students' L2 learning experience based on these motivations.

Very few participants in the present study exhibited Ought-to L2 Selves. It was found that this dimension of the L2MSS had little influence on students' L2

enrolment decisions. However, there can be some overlap between the Ideal and Ought-to constructs for some motivational influences, depending on the level of internalisation. Therefore, for students who expressed motivations to learn a second language for their careers, it is uncertain whether this was an external or internal instrumental reason, and therefore by which self it was informed. Furthermore, it could be possible that motivation was provided by a combination of the Ideal and Ought-to Selves. This finding means that L2 teachers need to focus more on addressing students' Ideal L2 Selves and the motivations to learn which relate to this self, as opposed to motivations relating to the Ought-to L2 Self. Regarding the last construct of the L2MSS, a wide variety of motivations were classified within the dimension of L2 Learning Experiences, some of which were strong motivational influences such as the teacher and past experiences. This places heavy responsibility on language teachers, as it was found that they were a strong influence on students' elective L2 enrolment decisions. Interesting, engaging, and relevant learning content is essential, as well as teachers' enthusiasm for the subject.

However, it is significant that Dörnyei's (2005) framework cannot explain the motivational situation for students who experience barriers to their elective L2 learning. As themes began to emerge from the data, it became evident that Dörnyei's (2005) framework consisting of the three dimensions was not sufficient to understand the complexity of motivations that affected students' choices to enrol in an L2. Instead, it was found that Martin and Jansen's (2012) framework offered a more effective set of lenses through which to view these data. Therefore, if researchers are to use Dörnyei's theory to categorise student motivations, it may be, given the complexity of motives, that the two frameworks need to be reconciled.

In summary, the conclusion drawn from the findings in relation to this research question is that the L2MSS can be effectively applied to language learners within the Tasmanian context, as well as learners of second languages other than English. The Ideal L2 Self was a strong motivational influence compared to the Ought-to L2 Self which had little influence on the participants of the present study. This indicates that encouraging the development of students' Ideal L2 Selves would be a positive way to sustain their motivation and continuation of languages education. Understanding that students are intrinsically motivated through the Ideal L2 Self ought to motivate policy accommodations to allocate resources and address structural barriers. As the pedagogical implications of this fall outside the scope of this thesis, it is recommended that further research be undertaken in this area.

## 6.5 Conclusions relating to RQ4

*Can the L2 Motivational Self System be applied to students who are not studying a second language?*

The previous conclusion drawn identified that the L2MSS can be effectively applied in the Tasmanian context, and furthermore, the present study found that a subsidiary conclusion drawn from the findings was that the L2MSS can, to some extent, be applied to students who were not studying a second language. Participants in the present study exhibited Ideal L2 Selves of varying strengths dependent on their profile classification. Participants classified as Continuing Students and Forced Discontinuing Students were identified as having strong Ideal L2 Selves, regardless of their current enrolment status in an L2 subject. This suggests that Ideal L2 Selves can exist but be somewhat dormant in so far as they cannot act as future self guides in the

current situation, therefore although they are formed they are not actively used. This dormancy also applied to Discontinuing Students, who did not identify a current Ideal L2 Self but proposed that in the future they may study an elective second language for reasons which were identified as the formation of a future, albeit weak, Ideal L2 Self. For participants classified as Undecided Students or New Discontinuing Students, the strength of their Ideal L2 Selves would be based on their reasons for continuing or discontinuing their elective L2 studies. It is possible that participants in these categories who had discontinued due to waning interest or enjoyment could still retain a strong Ideal L2 Self, while it is more likely that students who chose to discontinue as they did not perceive L2 skills to be relevant would have a weaker Ideal L2 Self, or lack one altogether if they did not envision any future L2 use. This suggests that students could extinguish a previous vision of an Ideal L2 Self. While Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) explained that the complex dynamic system (CDS) theory posited that because future self guides were dynamic constructs, the Ideal L2 Self could be brought closer to the current self to reduce the discrepancy further, the present study's conceptualisation of the New Discontinuing Students profile suggests that it is possible to extinguish it completely, as there is no longer the desire to be that self.

These findings are significant in so far as enabling policy makers and school systems to understand the motivations of students for second language learning despite their unenrolled status. Recognising that students who are not studying an elective L2 may still form some degree of an Ideal L2 Self provides relevant ways for stakeholders to attempt to encourage these students to choose an L2, or make the necessary changes to allow them to do so. Additionally, realising that Ideal L2 Selves can fade due to a lack of interest or relevance demonstrates the importance of

assisting students to nurture these Selves, which maintains motivation levels and encourages retention in elective L2 subjects. The implication of the lack of usefulness of Dörnyei's (2005) theory is the need for a concept which addresses the situation of students who experience barriers to their learning.

Understanding that students who are not enrolled in an elective L2 have also developed Ideal L2 Selves is integral in rationalising the need for schools and systems to reassess their supply and demand for second language subjects. Recognising that there are strongly motivated students who desire to learn an L2 ought to galvanise key stakeholders to address the situation of structural barriers which prevent these students from enrolling in L2 subjects at school. Furthermore, actions ought to be taken to nurture the Ideal L2 Selves of all students, not only those who are enrolled in an elective L2. These findings have demonstrated that even the students with the least commitment to second language learning harbour weak versions of an Ideal L2 Self, therefore, creating a school environment and community which values languages education and extols its benefits would be advantageous in encouraging L2 learning from a wider range of students. The implications for teaching in regards to the realisation that many students develop some form of an Ideal L2 Self are the need to make mandatory lessons engaging and interesting, as well as relevant to students' Ideal L2 Selves. Understanding that Ideal L2 Selves provide motivation to learn ought to encourage teachers to target all students and engage them in meaningful L2 learning, with positive, relevant experiences that inspire them to continue their languages education.

In summary, given the findings of the present study, relating to RQ 4 the conclusion drawn is that the L2 Motivational Self System can be successfully applied

to students who are not currently studying a second language. A number of students not studying an L2 were found to exhibit differing strengths of an Ideal L2 Self, and while the present study found the Ought-to L2 Self to have little influence on students' motivations, it is possible that in a larger sample there would be participants not studying an elective L2 who would exhibit varying degrees of Ought-to L2 Selves.

## **6.6 Recommendations**

The present study has identified a range of factors which influence students' motivations for elective second language learning, which has resulted in several key findings. These findings have the potential to inform future investigations in the field of second language learning motivation. The following three recommendations have been made based on the conclusions drawn from the present study.

### **6.6.1 Recommendation 1**

The present study provided insight into the group of participants who were classified as Forced Discontinuing Students, who contribute to the declining numbers in elective second language enrolments. Given that the findings of the present study indicated there is a significant cohort of students who wished to be studying an elective second language but were not, it is recommend that future research be conducted to gain further insight into the barriers and how these could be addressed to allow these students to enrol in an elective L2. Barriers such as subject availability and timetable structuring, including the amount of electives allowed, would be appropriate for future investigation.



### **6.6.2 Recommendation 2**

Given the finding of the current research into the motivations why students choose to enrol in an elective L2 subject at school, especially considering Dörnyei's (2005) construct of the Ideal L2 Self, it is recommended that future research investigate how to address these factors through teaching and lesson content to enhance students' experiences. A number of participants indicated their desire for more conversation practise in lessons, therefore future research regarding how this could be more effectively incorporated would enrich students' learning. Furthermore, some participants were alienated from study due to the teaching or lesson content, thus research which enhanced learning experiences may address attrition issues from students who initially choose to continue their elective L2 studies but discontinue at a later point in their education. Understanding that these students are influenced by strong Ideal L2 Selves, and the factors relating to this construct such as communication, travel and interest, will assist with addressing these motivational influences and enhancing students' L2 learning experiences.

### **6.6.3 Recommendation 3**

The findings of the present study indicated the reasons why students choose to discontinue their languages education at school. For students who do not desire to study an elective L2, classified as Discontinuing Students, the most prominent reasons cited were a lack of interest and irrelevance. Given this finding, it is recommended that future research investigate ways to make second language learning more appealing to this cohort of students, especially in terms of relevance. One of the most prominent beliefs of Discontinuing Students was that English could be used overseas,

whereas current research suggests that English is not enough and may lose its global dominance, and that monolingual speakers are at a disadvantage. Emphasising the value of second language skills and highlighting their relevance may be ways of addressing these issues, which future research could confirm. The recognition that Discontinuing Students also may develop Ideal L2 Selves to some extent is important, as if these students are harbouring a weak Ideal L2 Self it may be possible for teachers to nurture it and encourage these students via the factors that align with the concept of the Ideal L2 Self. Understanding this construct is important for teachers, systems and schools in attracting a wider range of students to elective L2 learning, as well as initially capturing their interest during mandatory L2 subjects.

## 6.7 Conclusion

The Asia Education Foundation (AEF) (2014) suggested that “current conditions in systems and schools are not conducive to building and sustaining student demand for languages” (p. 13), however from the findings of the present study the proposed argument is that current conditions in systems and schools are also not conducive to *meeting* the demand and *enabling* students to study an elective second language subject at school. It was found that Dörnyei’s (2005) dimension of the Ideal L2 Self from the L2MSS construct was a strong motivating factor both for students who were and were not studying a second language, which is an important recognition when considering how to create and nurture students’ motivations for L2 study. A significant cohort of students who participated in the present study indicated that they wished to be studying an elective L2 subject but were prevented by barriers. Therefore, there is a demand, however it is not realised by systems and schools who

perceive lack of enrolments as lack of interest, creating a cycle of less classes offered, which then creates more barriers for interested students. Languages need to be made an attractive option that fits within students' learning pathways, as opposed to being a fun luxury in which only some students are able to partake. Commitment to languages subjects needs to be made by schools and systems, so that students recognise that languages are valued, and there are learning pathways and timetabling structures which make them accessible. Dörnyei's (2005) framework is very useful in assisting to understand how it may be possible to appeal to students' motivations to study and further develop these motivations, but this applies mostly to those students who can and do study an elective L2, and this is why more research is needed to understand how this framework might apply to those who don't want to study or don't see the value of an L2. However, given that certain significant findings of this study relate to barriers that are not able to be addressed using Dörnyei's (2005) framework, it is doubtful that his theory is relevant in this context of prevented Ideal L2 Selves. It was found that neither Dörnyei's (2005) nor Martin and Jansen's (2012) frameworks for classifying student motivations captured the essence of the first two research questions of the study, and one had to be used selectively while the other needed to be adapted. The additional motivational profiles built into Martin and Jansen's (2012) original concept provide further depth and understanding of students' elective L2 enrolment decisions, which will enable stakeholders to better address the motivations and issues that affect enrolment trends in elective L2 subjects.

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# Appendix A

## Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)

### approval for research letter

Social Science Ethics Officer  
Private Bag 01 Hobart  
Tasmania 7001 Australia  
Tel: (03) 6226 2763  
Fax: (03) 6226 7148  
Katherine.Shaw@utas.edu.au



HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (TASMANIA) NETWORK

20 March 2015

Dr David Moltow  
Faculty of Education  
Private Bag 66

Student Researcher: Stephanie Clayton

*Sent via email*

Dear Dr Moltow

Re: FULL ETHICS APPLICATION APPROVAL  
Ethics Ref: **H0014676 - To L2 or not to L2? Selecting a second language as an elective subject in Years 9-12 in Tasmania**

We are pleased to advise that the Tasmania Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee approved the above project at its meeting on 16 March 2015.

This approval constitutes ethical clearance by the Tasmania Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee. The decision and authority to commence the associated research may be dependent on factors beyond the remit of the ethics review process. For example, your research may need ethics clearance from other organisations or review by your research governance coordinator or Head of Department. It is your responsibility to find out if the approval of other bodies or authorities is required. It is recommended that the proposed research should not commence until you have satisfied these requirements.

Please note that this approval is for four years and is conditional upon receipt of an annual Progress Report. Ethics approval for this project will lapse if a Progress Report is not submitted.

The following conditions apply to this approval. Failure to abide by these conditions may result in suspension or discontinuation of approval.

1. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval, to ensure the project is conducted as approved by the Ethics Committee, and to notify the Committee if any investigators are added to, or cease involvement with, the project.

A PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

2. Complaints: If any complaints are received or ethical issues arise during the course of the project, investigators should advise the Executive Officer of the Ethics Committee on 03 6226 7479 or [human.ethics@utas.edu.au](mailto:human.ethics@utas.edu.au).
3. Incidents or adverse effects: Investigators should notify the Ethics Committee immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
4. Amendments to Project: Modifications to the project must not proceed until approval is obtained from the Ethics Committee. Please submit an Amendment Form (available on our website) to notify the Ethics Committee of the proposed modifications.
5. Annual Report: Continued approval for this project is dependent on the submission of a Progress Report by the anniversary date of your approval. You will be sent a courtesy reminder closer to this date. **Failure to submit a Progress Report will mean that ethics approval for this project will lapse.**
6. Final Report: A Final Report and a copy of any published material arising from the project, either in full or abstract, must be provided at the end of the project.

Yours sincerely

Katherine Shaw  
Executive Officer  
Tasmania Social Sciences HREC

# Appendix B

## Department of Education (Tasmania) approval for research letter

Department of Education  
EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE SERVICES

2/73 Murray Street, Hobart  
GPO Box 169, Hobart, TAS 7001 Australia



File: 2015 - 17

21 May 2015

Ms Stephanie Clayton  
83 Hillcrest Road  
**Devonport TAS 7310**

Dear Ms Clayton

**To L2 or not to L2? Selecting a second language as an elective subject in Year 9-12 in Tasmania**

I have been advised by the Educational Performance Research Committee that the above research study adheres to the guidelines established subject to the timing of the surveys to avoid Year 11/12 exams and the department's own school surveys that are conducted in August. It is also a requirement that the letter to students be reduced in size.

Please note that you have been given permission to proceed at a general level, and not at individual school level. You will still need to seek permission from the principal of the school to be involved in the study. Please provide them with the File number or a copy of this letter when approaching them for assistance.

A copy of your final report should be forwarded to Educational Performance Services, Department of Education, GPO Box 169, Hobart, 7001 at your earliest convenience and within six months of the completion of the research phase.

If you have further questions or concerns please contact Fiona Atkins on (03) 6165 5711.

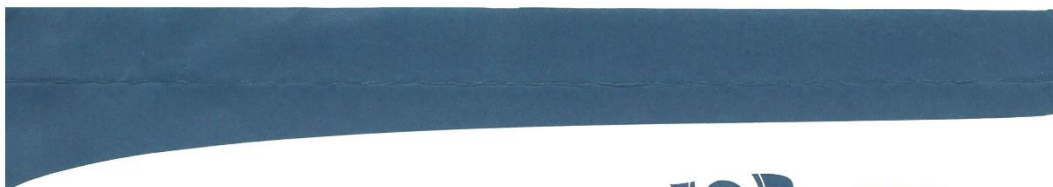
Yours sincerely

Katrina Beams, Assistant Director  
(Educational Performance Services)



## Appendix C

### Catholic Education (Tasmania) approval for research letter



27 May 2015

Ms Stephanie Clayton  
PhD Candidate  
University of Tasmania, Faculty of Education  
Private Bag 3502, Cradle Coast Campus  
Burnie TAS 7320

Dear Stephanie

Thank you for your application requesting approval to contact Catholic schools in Tasmania to conduct the research project which will investigate the reasons why year 9 – 12 students do or do not choose to study a second language as an elective subject at school.

Thank you for the information you have provided detailing the research project. I am happy to grant in principle permission for this research to be conducted through contact with our schools.

Please note however, that it is up to the individual school to determine whether they wish to participate in the study.

Please do not hesitate to contact this office if you require further information.

Yours sincerely

Mr John Mula  
Director

The D'Arcy Centre PO Box 102 North Hobart 7002 Tel: 03 6210 8888 State Office & Regional Office: South  
MacKillop Centre PO Box 160 Riverside 7250 Tel: 03 6327 1795 Regional Office: North  
Tenison Woods Centre PO Box 564 Ulverstone 7315 Tel: 03 6425 1603 Regional Office: North West  
ceo@catholic.tas.edu.au www.catholic.tas.edu.au Fax: 03 6210 8844

## **Appendix D**

### **Study participation invitation to principals and principal study information sheet**

Dear (name)

Your school is invited to participate in a state-wide research study into the reasons why year 9 – 12 students do or do not choose to study a second language as an elective subject at school.

This study involves a questionnaire, focus group interviews and individual interviews. The questionnaire is being offered to all Tasmanian students in years 9 to 12 (subject to their school's participation in this study). After the questionnaire data is analysed, a small number of students in the state will be selected to participate in focus groups and individual interviews to provide a deeper understanding of the data.

Your school's involvement in this study is voluntary, and while we would be pleased to have your students participate, we respect your right to decline. There will be no consequences to you or to them if you decide not to participate. All information will be treated in a confidential manner, and their names and the name of the school will not be used in any publication arising out of the research.

Please find attached an information sheet that further details the study. If you give your approval, you will be required to inform your year 9 to 12 students of the study and provide the questionnaire link for them to complete in their own time. If students in your school are invited to participate in either of the interviews, suitable times will need to be organised for the researcher to come to your school to conduct the interviews.

This is an opportunity for your students to share their perceptions of second language learning in Tasmania, and we hope to have them as participants in our study. Please reply as soon as possible to inform us whether or not you give your permission for us to invite students from your school to participate in the study. Students will provide their own consent prior to their participation.

Kind regards,

Dr David Moltow

Dr Paul Kebble

Miss Stephanie Clayton

*Principal Information Sheet 27.01.2015*

## **To L2 or not to L2? Studying a second language as an elective subject in years 9 – 12 in Tasmania**

### Principal Information Sheet

#### **Invitation**

Your school is invited to participate in a research study into the reasons why students do or do not choose to study a second language as an elective subject at school. This study is concerned with the motivations and experiences of students in years 9 to 12 who have the opportunity to enrol in second language elective classes in Tasmanian schools.

The study is being conducted in partial fulfilment of a PhD degree for Stephanie Clayton (PhD student researcher, Faculty of Education) under the supervision of Dr David Moltow (Faculty of Education) and Dr Paul Kebble (Faculty of Education).

#### **What is the purpose of this study?**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the motivations and experiences of students who have the opportunity to enrol in elective second language classes in Tasmanian schools. The aims of this study are to explore why students have or have not chosen to learn a second language at school, gender differences, and the factors that affect students' choice.

**Why has my school been invited to participate?**

Your school has been invited to participate in this study as it is a Tasmanian school that offers elective second language classes to students who are in years 9 to 12. Only students in these years are invited to participate in this study. They have been identified through the school and the researchers do not have access to your students' contact details.

It is important that you understand that your school's involvement in this study is voluntary. While we would be pleased to have your students participate, we respect your right to decline. There will be no consequences to you or to them if you decide not to participate, and this will not affect their treatment or schooling. All information will be treated in a confidential manner, and their name will not be used in any publication arising out of the research.

**What will I be asked to do?**

There are three parts to this study: a questionnaire, focus group interviews and individual interviews. The questionnaire is being offered to all Tasmanian students in years 9 to 12 (subject to their school's participation in this study). After the questionnaire data is analysed, a small number of students in the state will be selected to participate in focus group interviews to provide a deeper understanding of the questionnaire data. From these focus group interviews, some students may be asked to participate in an individual interview to further understand their responses during the focus group interviews.

If you choose for your school to participate in this study, you (or a staff member that you appoint for this role) will be required to inform your teachers and students about

the study and provide the questionnaire link for students (e.g. via email or on your student resource website). It would be appreciated if your pastoral teachers could remind students about completing the questionnaire at regular intervals during the time that the questionnaire is live and accessible to maximise the response rate.

Students will need to complete the online questionnaire during their own time unless you wish to allow your teachers to give them time during the school day to complete it.

If students from your school are selected for the focus group and individual interviews, suitable times within the school day would need to be organised for the researcher to come to your school and interview your students. We understand that you are extremely busy, so we would be happy for you to put us in contact with a staff member at your school who is able to organise an appropriate time with us.

### **What will my students be asked to do?**

Your students will be asked to complete an online questionnaire during their own time. The questionnaire will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. As an incentive, they will have the option to enter a draw to win one of five \$20 iTunes cards. This will be a separate link so that their responses in the questionnaire remain anonymous. The questionnaire will involve general questions about your students' age, gender and grade, as well as questions about their motivations and experiences concerning their overall schooling and second language learning. At the end of the questionnaire students will be asked if they wish to be considered for selection in the focus group interviews, and if so to provide their names so that they can be contacted through the school if selected. The questionnaire data will be anonymous unless they

choose to provide their name for the focus group selection. All data will remain confidential, and none of your students will be able to be identified from this research.

The questions asked during the focus group interview will be about information received from the questionnaire. The focus groups will consist of 6-8 students. Key themes will be discussed, and your students will be asked about their own motivations and experiences in regards to learning a second language. The aim of the interviews is to expand on the information collected from the questionnaires and gain a deeper understanding of your students' perceptions of elective second language learning. The focus group interviews will take approximately 30-45 minutes.

The individual interviews aim at gaining a deeper understanding of a student's responses during the focus group interview. The researcher may believe that the student has interesting perceptions of their learning and experiences that they did not wish to discuss in a group situation. If this occurs, the student will be invited to participate in an individual interview where they will be asked similar questions as those in the focus group interviews as well as to expand on their previous responses. The individual interviews will last approximately 30 minutes and be conducted in a public space that is visible to other staff.

**Are there any possible benefits from participation in this study?**

Your students will have the opportunity to reflect on and share their decision making processes for school subjects as well as their perceptions of second language learning.

**Are there any possible risks from participation in this study?**

There are no specific risks anticipated with participation in this study. If at any time during their participation in the study your students feel that they need support, they will be advised to speak to the school counsellor.

**What if my students change their mind during or after the study?**

If your students decide to discontinue participation at any time, they may do so without providing an explanation. Unless they provide their name on the questionnaire, your students will not be able to withdraw data from the questionnaire data after their participation due to the data being anonymous. Students will be able to withdraw data from the individual interviews if they choose to do so, however data from the focus groups may not be able to be withdrawn

**What will happen to the information when this study is over?**

All of the research data will be kept in a locked cabinet in Room D208 within the Faculty of Education at the Cradle Coast Campus and on a password protected computer. Only the researchers involved will have access to it. It will be destroyed after a period of five years via shredding (for paper data) or secure deletion (for electronic data). All information will be treated in a confidential manner, and your name will not be used in any publication arising out of the research.

**How will the results of the study be published?**

A summary of the results of the study and an electronic copy of the thesis will be sent to your school. These will need to be made available for students, parents and teachers to access. The report and thesis will be accessible after the completion of the study which is expected in December 2016. Your school and students will not be able to be identified in the publication of the results.



### **What if I have questions about this study?**

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study please feel free to contact any of the researchers by email or phone. Our details are:

Dr David Moltow

Email: [David.Moltow@utas.edu.au](mailto:David.Moltow@utas.edu.au)

Phone: (03) 6226 1946

Dr Paul Kebble

Email: [Paul.Kebble@utas.edu.au](mailto:Paul.Kebble@utas.edu.au)

Phone: 03 6324 3234

Stephanie Clayton

Email: [S.M.Clayton@utas.edu.au](mailto:S.M.Clayton@utas.edu.au)

Phone: (03) 64304986

This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study, please contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on +61 3 6226 7479 or email [human.ethics@utas.edu.au](mailto:human.ethics@utas.edu.au). The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. Please quote ethics reference number H0014676

**Thank you for taking the time to consider this study.**

**If you decide that your school will participate in the study, please reply to the email you received. You will then be provided with information sheets for your teachers and the link to the questionnaire.**

**Your students' consent will be given at the beginning of the survey if they choose to participate.**

Kind regards,

Dr David Moltow

Dr Paul Kebble

Miss Stephanie Clayton

# **Appendix E**

## **Survey instrument**

### **L2 questionnaire 2015**

Q1 To L2 or not to L2? Studying a second language as an elective subject in Years 9 - 12 in Tasmania.

#### Information Sheet

##### 1. Invitation

You are invited to participate in a research study into the reasons why students do or do not choose to study a second language as an elective subject at school. This study is concerned with the motivations and experiences of students in grades 9 to 12 who have the opportunity to enrol in second language elective classes in Tasmanian schools. The study is being conducted in partial fulfilment of a PhD degree for Stephanie Clayton (PhD student researcher, Faculty of Education) under the supervision of Dr David Moltow (Faculty of Education), Dr Paul Kebble (Faculty of Education), and Dr John Kertesz (Faculty of Education).

##### 2. What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to investigate the motivations and experiences of students who have the opportunity to enrol in elective second language classes in Tasmanian schools. The aims of this study are to explore why students have or have

not chosen to learn a second language at school, gender differences, and the factors that affect students' choice.

3. Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been invited to participate in this study as you are a Year 9, 10, 11 or 12 student enrolled in a Tasmanian school that offers elective second language classes. You have been identified through the school and the researchers do not have access to your contact details. It is important that you understand that your involvement in this study is voluntary. While we would be pleased to have you participate, we respect your right to decline. There will be no consequences to you if you decide not to participate, and this will not affect your treatment or schooling. All information will be treated in a confidential manner, and your name will not be used in any publication arising out of the research.

4. What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to complete an online questionnaire during your own time. The questionnaire will involve general questions about your age, gender and grade, as well as questions about your motivations and experiences concerning your overall schooling and second language learning. If you choose to complete the survey you can enter the draw to win one of five \$20 iTunes cards. The questionnaire will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

5. Are there any possible benefits from participation in this study?

You will have the opportunity to reflect on and share your decision making processes for school subjects as well as your perceptions of second language

learning.

6. Are there any possible risks from participation in this study?

There are no specific risks anticipated with participation in this study. However, if at any time you find that you require support for any reason, you will be advised to seek support from your class teacher.

7. What if I change my mind during or after the study? If you decide to discontinue participation at any time, you may do so without providing an explanation. Unless you provide your name on the questionnaire, you will not be able to withdraw data from the study after your participation due to the data being anonymous.

8. What will happen to the information when this study is over? All of the research data will be kept in a locked cabinet in Room D208 within the Faculty of Education at the Cradle Coast Campus and on a password protected computer. Only the researchers involved will have access to it. It will be destroyed after a period of five years via shredding (for paper data) or secure deletion (for electronic data). All information will be treated in a confidential manner, and your name will not be used in any publication arising out of the research.

9. How will the results of the study be published?

A summary of the results of the study and an electronic copy of the thesis will be sent to your school. These will be made available for students, parents and teachers to access through the principal. The report and thesis will be accessible after the completion of the study which is expected in December 2016. You will not be able to

be identified in the publication of the results.

#### 10. What if I have questions about this study?

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study please feel free to contact any of the researchers by email or phone. Our details are:

Dr David Moltow Email: David.Moltow@utas.edu.au Phone: (03) 6226 1946 or

Dr Paul Kebble Email: Paul.Kebble@utas.edu.au Phone: (03) 6324 3234 or

Dr John Kertesz Email: John.Kertesz@utas.edu.au Phone: (03) 6226 7678 or

Stephanie Clayton Email: S.M.Clayton@utas.edu.au Phone: (03) 64304986

This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study, please contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on +61 3 6226 7479 or email human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. Please quote ethics reference number [H0014676].

Q2 We would like to ask for your help by answering the following questions about second language learning. This survey is conducted by Stephanie Clayton, David Moltow, Paul Kebble and John Kertesz of the University of Tasmania to better understand how you feel about the learning of Languages Other Than English (LOTE), and your motivations for choosing or not choosing a LOTE as an elective

subject at school. This is NOT a test and there are no “right” or “wrong” answers. We are interested in your personal opinion. Please give your answers sincerely, as only this will guarantee the success of the investigation. All the information you provide will remain confidential and no individual will be identified in the report. Thank you very much for your help. Beginning the questionnaire by clicking the 'I AGREE' button indicates your consent to participate in the study.

### Q3 ATTITUDE TO SCHOOL

Q4 In this section we are interested in finding out how YOU feel about school and school work. We understand that there are some subjects which you prefer or find easier than others. However, we are asking you to tell us how you feel about your schooling overall.

Q5 Select the appropriate box to show how much you agree or disagree with the following statements

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Slightly Disagree (3)	Partly Agree (4)	Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)
I am happy at this school. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Whether or not I like a subject I do my best. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Even if I study I get nowhere. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do just enough work to get by. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



On school days I spend more time on leisure activities than homework. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do extra work if I fall behind. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would leave school tomorrow if I could. (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often fall behind in my school work. (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<p>I am prepared to do extra work to achieve good results. (9)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>If my results are good it is just good luck. (10)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>I always complete my homework. (11)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>I usually leave my study until the last minute. (12)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<p>I try to concentrate in class. (13)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>I am good at learning things by heart. (14)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>If new work is difficult to understand I forget about it. (15)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>I try to make good use of my study time. (16)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q6 LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH This section is to find out how you

feel about learning a Language Other Than English (LOTE).

Q7 Select the appropriate box to show how much you agree or disagree with the following statement

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Slightly Disagree (3)	Partly Agree (4)	Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)
Anyone who tries can learn a LOTE. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My parents encouraged me to learn a LOTE. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The things I want to do in the future involve learning a LOTE. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LOTE study should be compulsory up to Year 12. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LOTE is a girls' area of study. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<p>Learning a LOTE is necessary because people surrounding me expect me to. (6)</p> <p>For me LOTE is easier than Mathematics. (7)</p> <p>My school friends say that Australians should learn a LOTE. (8)</p> <p>LOTE helps me to understand Australia's multicultural society. (9)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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<p>I can imagine myself as someone who is able to speak a LOTE. (10)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>I make an effort to watch TV programs in a LOTE I have studied. (11)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>If I fail to study a LOTE I will be letting other people down. (12)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q8 Select the appropriate box to show how much you agree or disagree with the following statements

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Slightly Disagree (3)	Partly Agree (4)	Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)
For me  LOTE is  easier than  English. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe  all students  should learn  a LOTE. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would  rather spend  time on  subjects  other than  LOTE. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want to  be the kind of  person that  speaks a  LOTE well.  (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



<p>LOTE is only for clever students. (5)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>My friends say that learning a LOTE will get me a better job. (6)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>Girls are more interested than boys in studying a LOTE. (7)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>I believe that learning a LOTE is important because the people that I respect think that I should. (8)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

My parents tell me Australians should learn a LOTE. (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I see myself one day speaking a LOTE with native speakers around the world. (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
For me LOTE is easier than Science. (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learning LOTE is useless. (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q9 Select the appropriate box to show how much you agree or disagree with the following statements

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Slightly Disagree (3)	Partly Agree (4)	Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)
<p>LOTE should be compulsory up to Year 10. (1)</p> <p>LOTE will help me understand my family's cultural heritage. (2)</p> <p>My parents tell me that learning a LOTE will get me a better job. (3)</p> <p>Girls are more interested than boys in studying mathematics. (4)</p>	<p><input type="radio"/></p> <p><input type="radio"/></p> <p><input type="radio"/></p> <p><input type="radio"/></p>	<p><input type="radio"/></p> <p><input type="radio"/></p> <p><input type="radio"/></p> <p><input type="radio"/></p>	<p><input type="radio"/></p> <p><input type="radio"/></p> <p><input type="radio"/></p> <p><input type="radio"/></p>	<p><input type="radio"/></p> <p><input type="radio"/></p> <p><input type="radio"/></p> <p><input type="radio"/></p>	<p><input type="radio"/></p> <p><input type="radio"/></p> <p><input type="radio"/></p> <p><input type="radio"/></p>	<p><input type="radio"/></p> <p><input type="radio"/></p> <p><input type="radio"/></p> <p><input type="radio"/></p>

<p>Studying a LOTE is important to me because an educated person is supposed to be able to speak a second language. (5)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>I make an effort to listen to radio programs in a LOTE I have studied. (6)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>My school friends encourage me to learn a LOTE. (7)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<p>If I achieve my dreams, I will use a LOTE effectively in the future. (8)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>I feel that I should keep studying a LOTE because I have already spent years learning it. (9)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>I try to use LOTE outside of school. (10)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>It is difficult to score well in Year 12 LOTE exams. (11)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q10 Are you currently studying a second language as an elective subject?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Q11 STUDENTS NO LONGER STUDYING A LOTE

Q12 This section is for students who are NO LONGER studying a Language Other Than English (LOTE). You will be asked to think about the following questions for when you were last studying a LOTE. If you studied more than one LOTE complete this section for the LOTE that you preferred which was:

Q13 The following statements are about the learning of a LOTE. Mark your choice in the appropriate box

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Slightly Disagree (3)	Partly Agree (4)	Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)
I learnt something new in every LOTE lesson. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Even if I studied I got nowhere in LOTE. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In the LOTE class, English was rarely used. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I did well in LOTE. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I did extra work in LOTE if I fell behind. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<p>If new LOTE work was difficult to understand I forgot about it. (6)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>I was prepared to do extra work in LOTE to achieve good results. (7)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>I tried to concentrate in the LOTE class. (8)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>I would be happy to learn a LOTE in the future. (9)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



I did well in LOTE because I worked hard. (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I found learning a LOTE required regular study. (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We needed more school time to learn a LOTE. (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q14 Why did you not continue with your LOTE study?

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Slightly Disagree (3)	Partly Agree (4)	Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)
I did NOT want to study a LOTE. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do NOT need LOTE for my future studies. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I did NOT like learning a LOTE. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I did NOT like the LOTE teacher. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<p>LOTE clashed on the timetable with subjects I preferred. (5)</p> <p>The teacher advised me NOT to continue with LOTE study. (6)</p> <p>I did NOT like the LOTE class. (7)</p> <p>I can use English if I go overseas. (8)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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<p>LOTE</p> <p>will NOT get</p> <p>me a better</p> <p>job. (9)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>My</p> <p>friends</p> <p>dropped</p> <p>LOTE. (10)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>I could</p> <p>NOT fit</p> <p>LOTE into</p> <p>my course</p> <p>of study.</p> <p>(11)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>I found</p> <p>learning</p> <p>LOTE</p> <p>required</p> <p>constant</p> <p>work. (12)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I will never have an opportunity to use a LOTE. (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was NOT good at LOTE. (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I did NOT like the way that LOTE was taught. (15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I did NOT get on with the LOTE teacher. (16)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<p>The</p> <p>LOTE I</p> <p>wanted to</p> <p>study was</p> <p>NOT</p> <p>offered. (17)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Q15 What year level did you last study a LOTE?

- ☐ 7 (1)
- ☐ 8 (2)
- ☐ 9 (3)
- ☐ 10 (4)
- ☐ 11 (5)
- ☐ Other (6) \_\_\_\_\_

Q71 How likely are you to study an elective LOTE next year?

- ☐ Very Likely (29)
- ☐ Likely (30)
- ☐ Undecided (31)
- ☐ Unlikely (32)
- ☐ Very Unlikely (33)

Q16 This section is about you, your LOTE background and use.

Q17 What school do you attend?

Q18 What year are you in at school?

- ☐ 9 (1)
- ☐ 10 (2)
- ☐ 11 (3)
- ☐ 12 (4)

Q19 What is your age?

- ☐ 14 (1)
- ☐ 15 (2)
- ☐ 16 (3)
- ☐ 17 (4)
- ☐ 18 (5)
- ☐ 19 (6)
- ☐ Other (7) \_\_\_\_\_

Q20 What is your gender?

- ☐ Male (1)
- ☐ Female (2)

Q21 What is your home postcode?

Q22 Please fill in the following information. If you do not know the answer, write 'unsure' in the box.

Your first language (1)

Your country of birth (2)

Mother's first language (3)

Mother's country of birth (4)

Father's first language (5)

Father's country of birth (6)



Q69 Please indicate the highest level of your parents' formal education:

	Mother (1)	Father (2)
Primary school (1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some secondary school (2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Completed secondary school (3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Completed an apprenticeship or trade qualification (4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Completed post secondary qualification/degree (e.g TAFE or University) (5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know (6)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q23 Do any of your grandparents speak a LOTE as their first language?

- ☐ Yes (1)  
☐ No (2)

Answer If Do any of your grandparents speak a LOTE as their first language? Yes Is Selected

Q24 Please fill in the LOTEs that any of your grandparents speak as a first

language. Leave blank any spaces that are not needed.

Grandmother 1 (1)

Grandfather 1 (2)

Grandmother 2 (3)

Grandfather 2 (4)

Q25 What year level did you have your first LOTE lesson at school?

- ☐ Kindergarten (1)
- ☐ Prep (2)
- ☐ 1 (3)
- ☐ 2 (4)
- ☐ 3 (5)
- ☐ 4 (6)
- ☐ 5 (7)
- ☐ 6 (8)
- ☐ 7 (9)
- ☐ 8 (10)
- ☐ 9 (11)
- ☐ 10 (12)
- ☐ 11 (13)
- ☐ 12 (14)
- ☐ Unsure (15)

Q26 What was the first LOTE that you learnt at school?

Q73 Please list all the LOTE/s that you have studied at school:

1 (1)

2 (2)

3 (3)

4 (4)

5 (5)

6 (6)

7 (7)

8 (8)

9 (9)

10 (10)

Q74 Have you ever travelled to a country where the LOTE/s you are or were learning at school is spoken?

☐ Yes (1)

☐ No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To If you could travel overseas would yo...

Q75 Which language/s that you have studied at school have you travelled to a country where they speak that language? (please tick the boxes for those that apply)

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	8 (8)	9 (9)	10 (10)
Travelled to country (3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q76 What was the purpose for that visit? (please tick the boxes for those that apply)

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	8 (8)	9 (9)	10 (10)
Holiday (1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family reunion (2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent's work (3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Member of a sporting team (4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School trip (5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (6)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q77 If you could travel overseas would you try to visit a country where the  
 LOTE/s you have studied at school is spoken? (please tick the boxes that apply)

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	8 (8)	9 (9)	10 (10)
Yes										
(1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No (2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maybe										
(3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q27 Are you studying a LOTE outside of school?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Block

Q28 Please list the language/s that you are studying outside of school:

1 (1)

2 (2)

3 (3)

4 (4)

5 (5)

6 (6)

7 (7)

8 (8)

9 (9)

10 (10)

Q29 Have you ever travelled to a country where the LOTE/s you are learning outside of school is spoken?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To If you could travel overseas would yo...

Q30 Which language/s that you are learning outside of school have you travelled to a country where they speak that language? (please tick the boxes that apply)

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	8 (8)	9 (9)	10 (10)
Travelled to country (3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Q31 What was the purpose for that visit? (please tick the boxes that apply)

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	8 (8)	9 (9)	10 (10)
Holiday (1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family reunion (2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent's work (3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Member of a sporting team (4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School trip (5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (6)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q32 If you could travel overseas would you try to visit a country where the LOTE/s you are learning outside of school is spoken? (please tick the boxes that apply)

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	8 (8)	9 (9)	10 (10)
Yes										
(1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No (2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maybe										
(3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q33 Do you speak a LOTE at home?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Answer If Do you speak a LOTE at home? Yes Is Selected

Q34 Please list all the LOTEs that you speak at home:

1 (1)

2 (2)

3 (3)

4 (4)

5 (5)

6 (6)

7 (7)

8 (8)

9 (9)

10 (10)

Q35 How often do you speak these languages at home? (please tick the boxes

that apply)

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	8 (8)	9 (9)	10 (10)
Never (1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rarely (2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometimes (3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often (4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All the time (5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q36 Where else do you speak this language other than at home or school?

(please tick the boxes that apply)

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	8 (8)	9 (9)	10 (10)
Family gatherings (1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Church (2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Language class (3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shopping (4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
National clubs (5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teams (6)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nowhere else (8)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q37 Are you studying this language at school? (please tick the boxes that apply)

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	8 (8)	9 (9)	10 (10)
Yes										
(1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No										
(2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q38 Does anyone in your home (excluding yourself) regularly use a LOTE? (E.g. listen to the radio, speak regularly, read a newspaper, use it at work)

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Answer If Does anyone in your home (excluding yourself) regularly use a LOTE? (E.g. listen to the radio, sp... Yes Is Selected

Q39 Who is it?

- ☐ Mother (1)
- ☐ Father (2)
- ☐ Aunt (3)
- ☐ Uncle (4)
- ☐ Sister (5)
- ☐ Brother (6)
- ☐ Grandmother (7)
- ☐ Grandfather (8)
- ☐ Other (9) \_\_\_\_\_

Answer If Does anyone in your home (excluding yourself) regularly use a LOTE? (E.g. listen to the radio, sp... Yes Is Selected

Q40 How often do they speak this language?

	Moth er (1)	Fath er (2)	Aun t (3)	Uncl e (4)	Siste r (5)	Broth er (6)	Grandmoth er (7)	Grandfath er (8)	Othe r (9)
Never									
(1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rarely									
(2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometim es (3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often (4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All the time (5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Answer If Does anyone in your home (excluding yourself) regularly use a LOTE? (E.g. listen to the radio, sp... Yes Is Selected

Q41 Are you learning this language at school?

	Mothe r (1)	Fathe r (2)	Aun t (3)	Uncl e (4)	Siste r (5)	Brothe r (6)	Grandmothe r (7)	Grandfathe r (8)	Othe r (9)
Ye s (1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No (2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q42 Do you know anyone who regularly speaks a LOTE? (e.g. friend, neighbour, relative)

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)



Answer If Do you know anyone who regularly speaks a LOTE? Yes Is Selected

Q43 Who is it?

- ☐ Friend (1)
- ☐ Neighbour (2)
- ☐ Relative (3)
- ☐ Pen friend (4)
- ☐ Other (5) \_\_\_\_\_

Answer If Do you know anyone who regularly speaks a LOTE? Yes Is Selected

Q44 At school, are you learning the language of the person/people that you know who speak a LOTE? (please tick the boxes that apply)

	Friend (1)	Neighbour (2)	Relative (3)	Pen friend (4)	Other (5)
Yes (1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No (2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q45 While this questionnaire has tried to cover as much as possible, if you have any further comments about your second language learning please write what you think below.

Q46 Follow up focus group interviews will be held in a number of schools with 6 - 8 students in each group to further understand the responses given in this questionnaire. These focus group interviews will be held during the school day and provide the opportunity to talk to the researchers about your thoughts and experiences of LOTE. If you would like to be considered for selection, you will need to provide your name and school as contact details so that the researchers can invite you to participate if you are selected. This means that your questionnaire data will no longer be anonymous. However, only the researchers will have access to this data, and your name and school will not be used at any time except to contact you. You will receive an invitation through your school. It is important that you understand that the researchers will never have access to your personal details or home address. You will not be able to be identified from any publications from this research. Would you like to participate in a focus group interview?

☐ Yes (1)

☐ No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Block

Q47 Please fill in the following information so that if you are selected for a focus group we can send an invitation through your school.

First name (1)

Last name (2)

School (3)

Home group or form room teacher or class (for administration purposes e.g. daily attendance lists) (4)

Q48 Thank you very much for the time you have taken to complete this questionnaire. Your answers are invaluable to this research project and are greatly appreciated. Once you submit your questionnaire you will receive the competition link. Best of luck with your language studies!

#### Q49 STUDENTS WHO ARE STUDYING A LOTE

Q50 This section is for students who ARE studying a Language Other Than English (LOTE). You will be asked to answer the following questions about the LOTE you are currently studying.

Q51 What LOTE/s are you currently studying at school? Please list them below:

Q52 The following statements are about the learning of a LOTE. Mark your choice in the appropriate box. If you are studying more than one LOTE complete this section for the LOTE that you prefer.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Slightly Disagree (3)	Partly Agree (4)	Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)
I learn something new in every LOTE lesson. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Even if I study I get nowhere in LOTE. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In the LOTE class, English is rarely used. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do well in LOTE. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do extra work in LOTE if I fall behind. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<p>If new LOTE work is difficult to understand I forget about it. (6)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>I am prepared to do extra work in LOTE to achieve good results. (7)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>I try to concentrate in the LOTE class. (8)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>Given the choice I would NOT be in the LOTE class. (9)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I do well in LOTE because I work hard. (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find learning a LOTE requires regular study. (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We need more school time to learn a LOTE. (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q53 Why did you continue with your LOTE study?

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Slightly Disagree (3)	Partly Agree (4)	Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)
I wanted to study a LOTE. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I need the LOTE for my future studies. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy the LOTE class. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like the LOTE teacher. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LOTE fitted my timetable. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The teacher advised me to continue with LOTE. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I like the LOTE class. (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want to use LOTE when I travel. (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to get a job where I can use a LOTE. (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My friends are studying a LOTE. (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I needed one more subject. (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find studying a LOTE is easy. (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



I think it is important to learn a LOTE. (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am good at LOTE. (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The LOTE lessons are interesting. (15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is a good LOTE teacher. (16)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LOTE is compulsory. (17)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q70 How likely are you to study an elective LOTE next year?

- ☐ Very Likely (35)
- ☐ Likely (36)
- ☐ Undecided (37)
- ☐ Unlikely (38)
- ☐ Very Unlikely (39)

## Appendix F

### Survey deployment email to schools and teacher information sheet

Hi (name)

Thank you again for your assistance in our study. Our LOTE survey will go live this Sunday night ready for students to start participating from Monday. This email is to inform you of what you need to do to allow students to access the survey along with all the resources that you need.

The main things that you need to be aware of are:

- The survey is open from May 18 until July 31.
- The survey is for **all** students in years 9 – 12 whether they are studying a LOTE or not.
- The survey is entirely voluntary.
- Students who do wish to participate will be able to enter the draw to win one of five iTunes vouchers to the value of \$20.
- The survey is anonymous unless students choose to provide their name to be considered for the focus group interviews.
- All information will be treated confidentially, with no student or school being identified in any publication arising from the research.

Please find attached:

- **The invitation for students and the survey link – this is what you need to provide to students.**
- The teacher information sheet – this gives you all the details about the study and what you are required to do.

- The student information sheet – this is only for your own information and does *not* need to be provided to students. They will see this information sheet in the invitation and at the beginning of the survey.

What you need to do:

1. You need to provide students with the invitation and survey link (attachment 1 – Student Invitation). This can be done however this best suits you, such as via email or on a student resource page on your school intranet.
2. It would be appreciated if you/other teachers could also verbally inform students of the invitation so that they are aware of the study prior to receiving the invitation. If this is not possible, please provide a brief introduction to inform students that the school has chosen to participate in the study when you provide them with the information and survey link (via your chosen method).
3. If possible, please remind students about the survey once a week or so for a couple of weeks after first informing them of the study. Survey responses are generally low for any study, so this is to maximise participation rates as much as possible. Pastoral teachers may be a simple way to do this to access all year 9 – 12 students in morning or afternoon home room/form classes, depending on your school structure. The survey is open until the end of July to allow time for all schools and students to be invited – please don't feel you have to remind students the whole time it is open! Reminders during the first couple of weeks after they receive the invitation will be sufficient.

Getting the survey out to students is the main thing, anything else that you do will be most appreciated ☺ If you have any further questions please don't hesitate to ask me!

Best wishes,

Stephanie

*Teacher Information Sheet – Questionnaire 13.05.2015*

**To L2 or not to L2? Studying a second language as an elective subject  
in Years 9 – 12 in Tasmania**

**Teacher Information Sheet – Questionnaire**

**Invitation**

Your Year 9-12 students are invited to participate in a research study into the reasons why students do or do not choose to study a second language as an elective subject at school. This study is concerned with the motivations and experiences of students in Years 9 to 12 who have the opportunity to enrol in second language elective classes in Tasmanian schools.

The study is being conducted in partial fulfilment of a PhD degree for Stephanie Clayton (PhD student researcher, Faculty of Education) under the supervision of Dr David Moltow (Faculty of Education), Dr Paul Kebble (Faculty of Education), and Dr John Kertesz (Faculty of Education).

**What is the purpose of this study?**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the motivations and experiences of students who have the opportunity to enrol in elective second language classes in Tasmanian schools. The aims of this study are to explore why students have or have not chosen to learn a second language at school, gender differences, and the factors that affect students' choice.

**Why have my students been invited to participate?**

Your students have been invited to participate in this study as they are a Year 9, 10, 11 or 12 student enrolled in a Tasmanian school that offers elective second language classes. They have been identified through the school and the researchers do not have access to your students' contact details.

It is important that you understand that your students' involvement in this study is voluntary. While we would be pleased to have your students participate, we respect their right to decline. There will be no consequences to you or to them if they decide not to participate, and this will not affect their treatment or schooling. All information will be treated in a confidential manner, and their name will not be used in any publication arising out of the research.

**What will I be asked to do?**

If your principal agrees, you may wish to allow your students time during class to participate in the questionnaire. If you are a pastoral teacher for students in Years 9 – 12 you will be asked to remind your students weekly about completing the questionnaire during the time that the questionnaire is live.

**What will my students be asked to do?**

Your students will be asked to complete an online questionnaire during their own time. Students will have the opportunity to enter the draw to win one of five \$20 iTunes cards. The questionnaire will involve general questions about your students' age, gender and grade, as well as questions about their motivations and experiences concerning their overall schooling and second language learning. The questionnaire will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

**Are there any possible benefits from participation in this study?**

Your students will have the opportunity to reflect on and share their decision making processes for school subjects as well as their perceptions of second language learning.

**Are there any possible risks from participation in this study?**

There are no specific risks anticipated with participation in this study. However, if your students find that they require support they will be advised to seek support from the school counsellor.

**What if I change my mind during or after the study?**

If your students decide to discontinue participation at any time, they may do so without providing an explanation. Unless they provide their name on the questionnaire, your students will not be able to withdraw data from the questionnaire data after their participation due to the data being anonymous.

**What will happen to the information when this study is over?**

All of the research data will be kept in a locked cabinet in Room D208 within the Faculty of Education at the Cradle Coast Campus and on a password protected computer. Only the researchers involved will have access to it. It will be destroyed after a period of five years via shredding (for paper data) or secure deletion (for

electronic data). All information will be treated in a confidential manner, and your name will not be used in any publication arising out of the research.

### **How will the results of the study be published?**

A summary of the results of the study and an electronic copy of the thesis will be sent to your school. These will be made available for students, parents and teachers to access by the principal. The report and thesis will be accessible after the completion of the study which is expected in December 2016. Your school and students will not be able to be identified in the publication of the results.

### **What if I have questions about this study?**

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study please feel free to contact any of the researchers by email or phone. Our details are:

Dr David Moltow

Email: [David.Moltow@utas.edu.au](mailto:David.Moltow@utas.edu.au)

Phone: (03) 6226 1946 or

Dr Paul Kebble

Email: [Paul.Kebble@utas.edu.au](mailto:Paul.Kebble@utas.edu.au)

Phone: (03) 6324 3234

Dr John Kertesz

Email: [John.Kertesz@utas.edu.au](mailto:John.Kertesz@utas.edu.au)

Phone: (03) 6226 7678

Miss Stephanie Clayton

Email: [S.M.Clayton@utas.edu.au](mailto:S.M.Clayton@utas.edu.au)

Phone: (03) 64304986

This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study, please contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on +61 3 6226 7479 or email [human.ethics@utas.edu.au](mailto:human.ethics@utas.edu.au). The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. Please quote ethics reference number H0014676.



**This information sheet is yours to keep.**

Kind regards,

Dr David Moltow

Dr Paul Kebble

Dr John Kertesz

Miss Stephanie Clayton

## **Appendix G**

### **Student invitation to participate in the survey and information sheet**

Dear student,

You are invited to participate in a study about schooling and second language learning by completing an online questionnaire. Researchers at the University of Tasmania are very interested in hearing your thoughts and opinions about learning a second language at school and your decision in choosing whether or not to continue with an elective second language subject when you are in grades 9 – 12.

The questionnaire will take about 20 minutes to complete, and asks questions about: your attitude to school; your opinions of second language learning; reasons that affected your choice to study or not study an elective second language subject; your language background and use at home and outside of school; and general information about yourself such as age, school, and parents' language background.

By completing the questionnaire, you will be able to enter the draw to win one of five \$20 iTunes gift cards. This competition is run separately to the survey and will open in a new webpage. This is so when you provide your contact details they will not be linked in any way to your survey. The five winners will be selected by random draw.

At the end of the questionnaire, you will be given the opportunity to tell us if you would like to be considered for selection in a focus group interview. This is a small

group interview with other students where the researchers will ask questions about the questionnaire topics. This is to get a better understanding of what students think about second language learning and their reasons for choosing or not choosing a second language elective subject. If you choose to be considered for selection in a focus group interview you will receive an additional entry into the draw for an iTunes gift card.

If you would like to be considered for the focus group interviews, you will need to provide your name and school so that we can contact you if you are chosen to be in a group. This means that your questionnaire will no longer be anonymous, however the researchers are the only people who will have access to the questionnaire responses and you will never be able to be identified in any publication about the research study. Your name will remain confidential at all times during and after the study. If you do not wish to be considered for the focus group interviews, you do not need to provide any contact details and your questionnaire will remain anonymous.

We hope you will help us by completing the questionnaire which can be accessed at the below link. Please allow 20 minutes to complete the survey in one sitting, as there is no 'save' option.

[Click here to take the survey.](#)

The information sheet for the survey is included below, which further explains the study and provides our contact details if you have any questions.

Kind regards,

Dr David Moltow, Dr Paul Kebble, Dr John Kertesz and Miss Stephanie Clayton

*Participant Information Sheet – Questionnaire***To L2 or not to L2? Studying a second language as an elective subject  
in Years 9 – 12 in Tasmania***Participant Information Sheet – Questionnaire***Invitation**

You are invited to participate in a research study into the reasons why students do or do not choose to study a second language as an elective subject at school. This study is concerned with the motivations and experiences of students in years 9 to 12 who have the opportunity to enrol in second language elective classes in Tasmanian schools.

The study is being conducted in partial fulfilment of a PhD degree for Stephanie Clayton (PhD student researcher, Faculty of Education) under the supervision of Dr David Moltow (Faculty of Education), Dr Paul Kebble (Faculty of Education) and Dr John Kertesz (Faculty of Education).

**What is the purpose of this study?**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the motivations and experiences of students who have the opportunity to enrol in elective second language classes in Tasmanian schools. The aims of this study are to explore why students have or have not chosen to

learn a second language at school, gender differences, and the factors that affect students' choice.

**Why have I been invited to participate?**

You have been invited to participate in this study as you are a Year 9, 10, 11 or 12 student enrolled in a Tasmanian school that offers elective second language classes.

You have been identified through the school and the researchers do not have access to your contact details.

It is important that you understand that your involvement in this study is voluntary.

While we would be pleased to have you participate, we respect your right to decline.

There will be no consequences to you if you decide not to participate, and this will not affect your treatment or schooling. All information will be treated in a confidential manner, and your name will not be used in any publication arising out of the research.

**What will I be asked to do?**

You will be asked to complete an online questionnaire during your own time. The questionnaire will involve general questions about your age, gender and grade, as well as questions about your motivations and experiences concerning your overall schooling and second language learning. If you choose to complete the survey you can enter the draw to win one of five \$20 iTunes cards. The questionnaire will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

For many questions you will be asked to indicate your opinion after each statement by selecting the box that best indicates the extent to which you disagree or agree. An example of one of these questions is:

*I want to learn a second language because I would like to travel*

<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Slightly	<input type="checkbox"/> Partly	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly
Disagree		disagree	Agree		Agree

Other question will ask you to write an answer, such as:

*What language are you currently studying?* \_\_\_\_\_

At the end of the questionnaire, you will be given the opportunity to tell us if you would like to be considered for selection in a focus group interview which would take place during school time. This is a small group interview with other students where the researchers will ask questions about the questionnaire topics to get a better understanding of what students think about second language learning and their reasons for choosing or not choosing a second language elective subject. If you choose to be considered for selection in a focus group interview you will receive an additional entry into the draw for an iTunes gift card.

If you would like to be considered for the focus group interviews, you will need to provide your name and school so that we can contact you if you are chosen to be in a group. This means that your questionnaire will no longer be anonymous, however the researchers are the only people who will have access to the questionnaire responses and you will never be able to be identified in any publication about the research study. Your name will remain confidential at all times during and after the study. If you do not wish to be considered for the focus group interviews, you do not need to provide any contact details and your questionnaire will remain anonymous.

If you participate in the focus group interviews you may also be invited to participate in an individual interview. This means that the researchers were very interested in what you were saying in your focus group and would like the opportunity to hear more about your opinions. If you participate in an individual interview it will be conducted in school time, in a public area visible to other staff members.

**Are there any possible benefits from participation in this study?**

You will have the opportunity to reflect on and share your decision making processes for school subjects as well as your perceptions of second language learning.

**Are there any possible risks from participation in this study?**

There are no specific risks anticipated with participation in this study. However, if at any time you find that you require support for any reason, you will be advised to seek support from your school counsellor.

**What if I change my mind during or after the study?**

If you decide to discontinue participation at any time, you may do so without providing an explanation. Unless you provide your name on the questionnaire, you will not be able to withdraw data from the study after your participation due to the data being anonymous.

**What will happen to the information when this study is over?**

All of the research data will be kept in a locked cabinet in Room D208 within the Faculty of Education at the Cradle Coast Campus and on a password protected computer. Only the researchers involved will have access to it. It will be destroyed after a period of five years via shredding (for paper data) or secure deletion (for electronic data). All information will be treated in a confidential manner, and your name will not be used in any publication arising out of the research.

**How will the results of the study be published?**

A summary of the results of the study and an electronic copy of the thesis will be sent to your school. These will be made available for students, parents and teachers to access through the principal. The report and thesis will be accessible after the completion of the study which is expected in December 2016. You will not be able to be identified in the publication of the results.

**What if I have questions about this study?**

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study please feel free to contact any of the researchers by email or phone. Our details are:

Dr David Moltow

Email: [David.Moltow@utas.edu.au](mailto:David.Moltow@utas.edu.au)

Phone: (03) 6226 1946

Dr John Kertesz

Email: [John.Kertesz@utas.edu.au](mailto:John.Kertesz@utas.edu.au)

Phone: (03) 6226 7678

Dr Paul Kebble

Email: [Paul.Kebble@utas.edu.au](mailto:Paul.Kebble@utas.edu.au)

Phone: 03 6324 3234

Miss Stephanie Clayton

Email: [S.M.Clayton@utas.edu.au](mailto:S.M.Clayton@utas.edu.au)

Phone: (03) 64304986

This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study, please contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on +61 3 6226 7479 or email [human.ethics@utas.edu.au](mailto:human.ethics@utas.edu.au). The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. Please quote ethics reference number H0014676.

**Thank you for taking the time to consider this study.**



**If you decide to participate in the study, you will provide your consent at the beginning of the survey.**

Kind regards,

Dr David Moltow

Dr Paul Kebble

Dr John Kertesz

Miss Stephanie Clayton

## **Appendix H**

### **Focus group interview schedule**

{Introduce myself, tell my second language story}

Now I would like to know about have your second language learning experiences.

#### **Prompts**

Tell me about the LOTE situation at your school

What do you think of LOTE study at your school? Teachers/content/peers

Did job considerations play a role for you?

Did anyone influence your decision to study this language?

Would you consider learning a LOTE in the future?

Do you speak more than one language?

Does anyone in your family have a LOTE background?

Have you travelled before? School trips

ATAR scores

#### **Prompts for students who do study a LOTE**

Do you relate your reasons for studying to any long-term plans you may have?

Do you have a picture or vision of yourself with regards to this language?

If so, how does it affect your motivation?

Do you see yourself using this language in the future?

Can you imagine being fluent in this language?

What do you hope to gain from studying this language?

Do you speak any other languages?

Do you have any other reasons for studying it?

**Prompts for students not studying a LOTE**

Did something change your mind?

Does something at home/school stop you?

How do you feel about not studying a LOTE now?

Have you ever wanted to study a LOTE?

Have you ever liked learning a LOTE?

# Appendix I

## Student focus group information sheet



FACULTY OF EDUCATION

*Participant Information Sheet – Focus Groups and Interviews 16.07.2015*

### **To L2 or not to L2? Studying a second language as an elective subject in Years 9 – 12 in Tasmania**

Participant Information Sheet – Focus Groups and Interviews

#### **Invitation**

You are invited to participate in a research study into the reasons why students do or do not choose to study a second language as an elective subject at school. This study is concerned with the motivations and experiences of students in grades 9 to 12 who have the opportunity to enrol in second language elective classes in Tasmanian schools.

The study is being conducted in partial fulfilment of a PhD degree for Stephanie Clayton (PhD student researcher, Faculty of Education) under the supervision of Dr David Moltow (Faculty of Education), Dr Paul Kebble (Faculty of Education) and Dr John Kertesz (Faculty of Education).

**What is the purpose of this study?**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the motivations and experiences of students who have the opportunity to enrol in elective second language classes in Tasmanian schools. The aims of this study are to explore why students have or have not chosen to learn a second language at school, gender differences, and the factors that affect students' choice.

**Why have I been invited to participate?**

You have been invited to participate in this study as you are a Year 9, 10, 11 or 12 student enrolled in a Tasmanian school that offers elective second language classes. You have been selected as you indicated at the end of our questionnaire that you would be like to be included in the focus group interviews.

If the researchers are interested in your responses during the focus group interviews there is also the possibility that you may be invited to participate in an individual interview to further understand your responses. This invitation may occur immediately after the conclusion of your focus group interview or you may receive an invitation after the data has been analysed.

You have been identified through the school and the researchers do not have access to your contact details. It is important that you understand that your involvement in this study is voluntary. While we would be pleased to have you participate, we respect your right to decline. There will be no consequences to you if you decide not to participate, and this will not affect your treatment or schooling. All information will

be treated in a confidential manner, and your name will not be used in any publication arising out of the research.

### **What will I be asked to do?**

You will be asked to participate in a small focus group interview. This group will involve 6-8 students identified from the questionnaire data. The focus group interview will take place during school hours, for example a study period or lunch time. The focus group interview is expected to take approximately 30-45 minutes.

If you are invited to participate in the individual interview it will take place in a public space visible to other staff members. The interview will last approximately 30 minutes.

The questions asked during both types of interview will be about information received from the questionnaire that was previously offered to all students in Years 9-12 are enrolled in Tasmanian schools that offer second language elective classes. Key themes will be discussed, and you will be asked about your own motivations and experiences in regards to learning a second language. The aim of the interviews is to expand on the information collected from the questionnaire, and gain a deeper understanding of your thoughts about elective second language learning. The individual interviews provide the opportunity to share your experiences confidentially with the researcher.

The interviews will be audio recorded to accurately report the information collected. All data will be de-identified, with all names replaced by pseudonyms. Only the

researchers will have access to the original list of names. You will not be able to be identified from this research.

**Are there any possible benefits from participation in this study?**

You will have the opportunity to reflect on and share your decision making processes for school subjects as well as your perceptions of second language learning.

**Are there any possible risks from participation in this study?**

There are no specific risks anticipated with participation in this study. However, if at any time you find that you require support for any reason, you will be advised to seek support from your school counsellor.

**What if I change my mind during or after the study?**

If you decide to discontinue participation at any time, you may do so without providing an explanation. You will be able to withdraw data from individual interviews if you choose to do so, however data may not be able to be withdrawn from the focus group interviews.

**What will happen to the information when this study is over?**

All of the research data will be kept in a locked cabinet in Room D208 within the Faculty of Education at the Cradle Coast Campus and on a password protected computer. Only the researchers involved will have access to it. It will be destroyed after a period of five years via shredding (for paper data) or secure deletion (for electronic data). All information will be treated in a confidential manner, and your name will not be used in any publication arising out of the research.

**How will the results of the study be published?**

A summary of the results of the study and an electronic copy of the thesis will be sent to your school. These will be made available for students, parents and teachers to

access through the principal. The report and thesis will be accessible after the completion of the study which is expected in December 2016. You will not be able to be identified in the publication of the results.

**What if I have questions about this study?**

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study please feel free to contact any of the researchers by email or phone. Our details are:

Dr David Moltow

Email: [David.Moltow@utas.edu.au](mailto:David.Moltow@utas.edu.au)

Phone: (03) 6226 1946

Dr Paul Kebble

Email: [Paul.Kebble@utas.edu.au](mailto:Paul.Kebble@utas.edu.au)

Phone: (03) 6324 3234

Dr John Kertesz

Email: [John.Kertesz@utas.edu.au](mailto:John.Kertesz@utas.edu.au)

Phone: (03) 6226 7678

Miss Stephanie Clayton

Email: [S.M.Clayton@utas.edu.au](mailto:S.M.Clayton@utas.edu.au)

Phone: (03) 64304986

This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study, please contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on +61 3 6226 7479 or email [human.ethics@utas.edu.au](mailto:human.ethics@utas.edu.au). The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. Please quote ethics reference number H0014676.

**Thank you for taking the time to consider this study. This information sheet is yours to keep. If you decide to participate in the study, you will need to complete and return the attached consent form to your school office. This is due by the [insert date here].**



Kind regards,

Dr David Moltow

Dr Paul Kebble

Dr John Kertesz

Miss Stephanie Clayton

## Appendix J

### Student focus group consent form



FACULTY OF EDUCATION

*Participant Focus Group and Interview Consent Form 16.07.2015*

### **To L2 or not to L2? Studying a second language as an elective subject in Years 9 to 12 in Tasmania**

Participant Consent Form – Focus Group and Interview

1. I agree to take part in the research study named above.
2. I have read and understood the Information Sheet for this study.
3. The nature and possible effects of the study have been explained to me.
4. I understand that the study involves my participation in a focus group and possibly an individual interview about my motivations when considering whether or not to study a second language at school.
5. I understand that participation involves no anticipated risks. However, should I need support for any reason, support will be available from the school counsellor.
6. I understand that all research data will be securely stored on the University of Tasmania Cradle Coast Campus premises for five years from the publication of the study results, and will then be destroyed.
7. Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.
8. I understand that the researchers will maintain confidentiality and that any information I supply to the researchers will be used only for the purposes of the research.
9. I understand that the results of the study will be published in a way that I cannot be identified as a participant.

10. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without any effect.

I understand that my child will be able to withdraw their data after completing the individual interview if they choose to do so. I understand that data may not be able to be withdrawn from the focus group interview.

You may choose to give your consent for only the focus group interview, or both interviews.

*Please tick the boxes to show your consent for each aspect of the research study:*

I agree to participate in a focus group interview ☐

☐

I agree to participate in an individual interview

Participant's name:

---

Participant's signature:

---

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Statement by Investigator**

☐

I have explained the project and the implications of participation in it to this volunteer and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation.

If the Investigator has not had an opportunity to talk to participants prior to them participating, the following must be ticked.

☐

The participant has received the Information Sheet where my details have been provided so participants have had the opportunity to contact me prior to consenting to participate in this project.

Investigator's name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Investigator's signature:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix K

### Parent/Guardian focus group information sheet



FACULTY OF EDUCATION

*Parent/Guardian Information Sheet – Focus Groups and*

### **To L2 or not to L2? Studying a second language as an elective subject in Years 9 – 12 in Tasmania**

Parent/Guardian Information Sheet – Focus Groups and Interviews

#### **Invitation**

Your child is invited to participate in a research study into the reasons why students do or do not choose to study a second language as an elective subject at school. This study is concerned with the motivations and experiences of students in grades 9 to 12 who have the opportunity to enrol in second language elective classes in Tasmanian schools.

The study is being conducted in partial fulfilment of a PhD degree for Stephanie Clayton (PhD student researcher, Faculty of Education) under the supervision of Dr David Moltow (Faculty of Education), Dr Paul Kebble (Faculty of Education) and Dr John Kertesz (Faculty of Education).

**What is the purpose of this study?**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the motivations and experiences of students who have the opportunity to enrol in elective second language classes in Tasmanian schools. The aims of this study are to explore why students have or have not chosen to learn a second language at school, gender differences, and the factors that affect students' choice.

**Why has my child been invited to participate?**

Your child has been invited to participate in this study as they are a Year 9, 10, 11 or 12 student enrolled in a Tasmanian school that offers elective second language classes. Your child has been selected as they indicated at the end of our questionnaire that they would be like to be included in the focus group interviews.

If the researchers are interested in your child's responses during the focus group interviews there is also the possibility that your child may be invited to participate in an individual interview to further understand their responses. This invitation may occur immediately after the conclusion of their focus group interview or your child may receive an invitation after the data has been analysed.

Your child has been identified through the school and the researchers do not have access to you or your child's contact details. It is important that you understand that your child's involvement in this study is voluntary. While we would be pleased to have your child participate, we respect their and your right to decline. There will be no consequences to you or to them if they decide not to participate, and this will not affect their treatment or schooling. All information will be treated in a confidential

manner, and your child's name will not be used in any publication arising out of the research.

**What will my child be asked to do?**

Your child will be asked to participate in a small focus group interview. This group will involve 6-8 students identified from the questionnaire data. The focus group interview will take place during school hours, such as a study period or lunch time. The focus group interview is expected to take approximately 30-45 minutes.

If your child is invited to participate in the individual interview it will take place in a public space visible to other staff members. The interview will last approximately 30 minutes.

The questions asked during both types of interview will be about information received from the questionnaire that was previously offered to all students in Years 9-12 are enrolled in Tasmanian schools that offer second language elective classes. Key themes will be discussed, and your child will be asked about their own motivations and experiences in regards to learning a second language. The aim of the interviews is to expand on the information collected from the questionnaires and gain a deeper understanding of your child's thoughts about elective second language learning. The individual interviews provide the opportunity to share their experiences confidentially with the researcher.

The interviews will be audio recorded to accurately report the information collected. All data will be de-identified, with all names replaced by pseudonyms. Only the

researchers will have access to the original list of names. Your child will not be able to be identified from this research.

**Are there any possible benefits from participation in this study?**

Your child will have the opportunity to reflect on and share their decision making processes for school subjects as well as their perceptions of second language learning.

**Are there any possible risks from participation in this study?**

There are no specific risks anticipated with participation in this study. However, if for any reason your child finds that they need support they will be advised to seek support from the school counsellor.

**What if my child changes their mind during or after the study?**

If your child decides to discontinue participation at any time, they may do so without providing an explanation. Your child will be able to withdraw data from the individual interviews if they choose to do so, however data may not be able to be withdrawn from the focus group interviews.

**What will happen to the information when this study is over?**

All of the research data will be kept in a locked cabinet in Room D208 within the Faculty of Education at the Cradle Coast Campus and on a password protected computer. Only the researchers involved will have access to it. It will be destroyed after a period of five years via shredding (for paper data) or secure deletion (for electronic data). All information will be treated in a confidential manner, and your name will not be used in any publication arising out of the research.

**How will the results of the study be published?**

A summary of the results of the study and an electronic copy of the thesis will be sent to your child's school. These will be made available for students, parents and teachers



to access by the principal. The report and thesis will be accessible after the completion of the study which is expected in December 2016. Your child will not be able to be identified in the publication of the results.

**What if I have questions about this study?**

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study please feel free to contact any of the researchers by email or phone. Our details are:

Dr David Moltow

Email: [David.Moltow@utas.edu.au](mailto:David.Moltow@utas.edu.au)

Phone: (03) 6226 1946

Dr Paul Kebble

Email: [Paul.Kebble@utas.edu.au](mailto:Paul.Kebble@utas.edu.au)

Phone: (03) 6324 3234

Dr John Kertesz

Email: [John.Kertesz@utas.edu.au](mailto:John.Kertesz@utas.edu.au)

Phone: (03) 6226 7678

Miss Stephanie Clayton

Email: [S.M.Clayton@utas.edu.au](mailto:S.M.Clayton@utas.edu.au)

Phone: (03) 64304986

This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study, please contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on +61 3 6226 7479 or email [human.ethics@utas.edu.au](mailto:human.ethics@utas.edu.au). The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. Please quote ethics reference number H0014676.

**Thank you for taking the time to consider this study. This information sheet is yours to keep. If you agree for your child to participate in the study, you need to sign the attached consent form and return it to the office at your child's school by the *[insert date here]*.**

Kind regards,

Dr David Moltow

Dr Paul Kebble

Dr John Kertesz

Miss Stephanie Clayton

# Appendix L

## Parent/Guardian focus group consent form



FACULTY OF EDUCATION

*Parent/Guardian Focus Group and Interview Consent Form 16.07.2015*

### **To L2 or not to L2? Studying a second language as an elective subject in Years 9 to 12 in Tasmania**

Parent/Guardian Consent Form – Focus Group and Interviews

1. I agree that my child can take part in the research study named above.
2. I have read and understood the Information Sheet for this study.
3. The nature and possible effects of the study have been explained to me.
4. I understand that the study involves my child in a focus group and possibly an individual interview about their motivations when considering whether or not to study a second language at school.
5. I understand that participation involves no anticipated risks. However, should my child need support for any reason, support will be available from the school counsellor
6. I understand that all research data will be securely stored on the University of Tasmania Cradle Coast Campus premises for five years from the publication of the study results, and will then be destroyed.
7. Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.
8. I understand that the researchers will maintain confidentiality and that any information my child supplies to the researchers will be used only for the purposes of the research.
9. I understand that the results of the study will be published in a way that my child cannot be identified as a participant.

10. I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that they may withdraw at any time without any effect.

I understand that my child will be able to withdraw their data after completing the individual interview if they choose to do so. I understand that data may not be able to be withdrawn from the focus group interview.

You may choose to give your consent for only the focus group interview, or both interviews.

*Please tick the boxes to show your consent for each aspect of the research study:*

I agree for my child to participate in a focus group ☐  
interview

I agree for my child to participate in an individual ☐  
interview

Parent/Guardian's name:

---

Parent/Guardian's signature:

---

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Statement by Investigator**

☐

I have explained the project and the implications of participation in it to this volunteer and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation.

If the Investigator has not had an opportunity to talk to participants prior to them participating, the following must be ticked.

☐

The participant has received the Information Sheet where my details have been provided so participants have had the opportunity to contact me prior to consenting to participate in this project.

Investigator's name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Investigator's signature:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix M

### Highest percentages of student agreement with statements of LOTE continuation reasons

#	Likert scale statement	Total %	Male %	Female %
1	I wanted to study a LOTE	95	95	95
2	I like the LOTE teacher	95	100	90
3	I want to use LOTE when I travel	95	98	93
4	I enjoy the LOTE class	93	93	93
5	I like the LOTE class	92	93	90
6	There is a good LOTE teacher	92	95	88
7	The LOTE lessons are interesting	90	91	88
8	I think it is important to learn a LOTE	88	86	90
9	I am good at LOTE	85	80	90
10	The teacher advised me to continue with LOTE	80	75	86
11	LOTE fitted my timetable	72	73	71
12	I would like to get a job where I can use a LOTE	67	66	69
13	My friends are studying LOTE	65	70	60
14	I find studying a LOTE is easy	62	61	62
15	I need the LOTE for my future studies	57	59	55
16	I needed one more subject	22	20	24
17	LOTE is compulsory	12	7	17

## Appendix N

### Highest percentages of student agreement with statements of LOTE discontinuation reasons

#	Likert scale statement	Total %	Male %	Female %
1	I can use English if I go overseas	74	74	76
2	I do NOT need LOTE for my future studies	66	64	69
3	I could NOT fit LOTE into my course of study	63	60	67
4	I found LOTE learning required constant work	61	64	60
5	The LOTE I wanted to study was NOT offered	55	54	56
6	My friends dropped LOTE	53	52	55
7	I did NOT want to study a LOTE	52	51	54
8	LOTE clashed on the timetable with subjects I preferred	50	55	47
9	LOTE will NOT get me a better job	46	45	46
10	I did NOT like the LOTE class	45	47	45
11	I did NOT like learning a LOTE	44	46	43
12	I was NOT good at LOTE	41	39	41
13	I did NOT like the way LOTE was taught	42	44	39
14	I did NOT like the LOTE teacher	37	39	36
15	I will never have an opportunity to use a LOTE	32	33	32
16	I did NOT get on with the LOTE teacher	29	34	23
17	The teacher advised me not to continue with LOTE study	17	22	15